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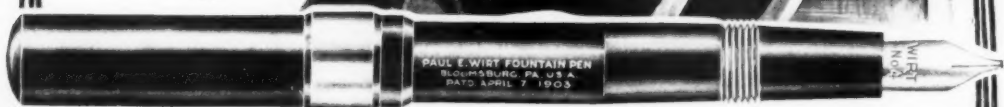
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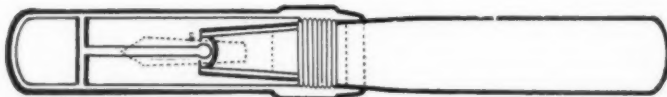
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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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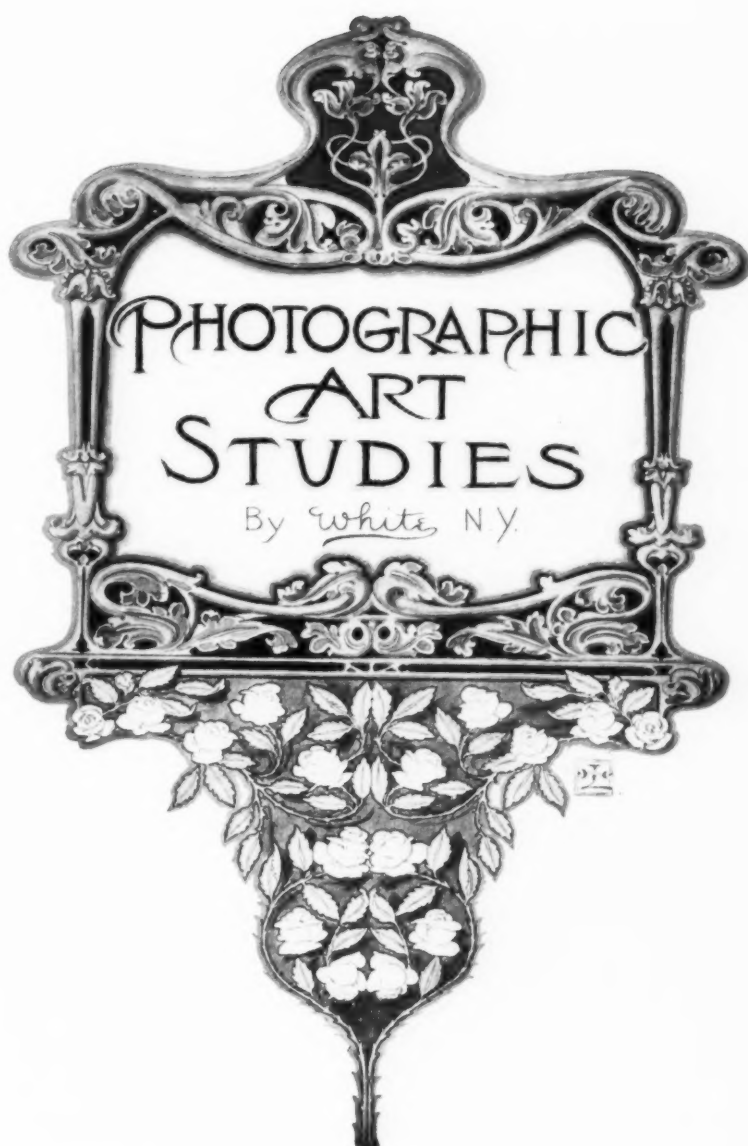
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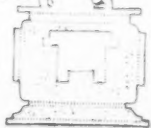
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With anxiety he turned the pages and scanned the column

"The Skirts of Chance"—page 33

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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The Skirts of Chance

BY HORACE HAZELTINE

AUTHOR OF "THE CITY OF ENCOUNTERS," ETC.

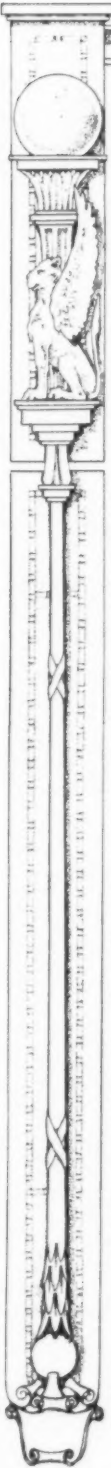
Illustrated by Frederick J. Mulhaupt



HE crowd around the roulette-table stood three deep. The Englishman was plunging; recklessly spreading the board with twenty-five dollar chips. To the habitués of the house, the Englishman and his method of play were alike awe-inspiring. The colossal proportions of the sitting figure, whose massive head rose level with the shortest of the standing spectators, commanded a certain subservient respect, while the opulent abandon with which he scattered his bets held captive the admiration of the assemblage.

"Eight—black—even—low!" droned the croupier behind the table, as the little white ball, after an instant of indecision, settled into the pocket whose number he announced.

The big man gathered in his winnings. In drawing the piles towards him he disarranged them, causing them to topple, and in their fall one of the chips shot perversely over the table's edge. At that moment, a waiter, approaching with tray and glasses, had caused



the men at the plunger's side to stand back that he might have room to serve his orders. One man, however, who occupied a foremost place had moved but a step aside. He was young and tall and fair, and better dressed than the majority of those who watched the play. He was close to the table, and, as the chip fell he stooped, with agile quickness, and caught it before it reached the floor.

The big Englishman noted the feat, and voiced his applause. "Good lad!" he exclaimed. And when the "good lad" would have returned the chip to the table with its fellows, he swept it back with a ponderous arm. "Keep it!" he commanded. "Cash it in! Or, play it, as you prefer."

The young man's murmured "thank you" was scarcely audible. He had set his teeth and his face was very pale. But into his great gray eyes had come a new light, the light of hope suddenly reawakened.

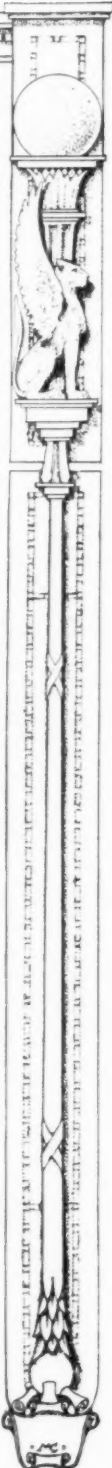
Once more the little white ball was spinning, humming as it rotated in its groove around the edge of the basin above the revolving wheel—and once more the Briton was scattering his chips over the red and black squares. For the moment, however, the attention of the onlookers had reverted from him to the youth at his side, whose thin, white fingers now nervously turned over and over the yellow celluloid disc which had been given him.

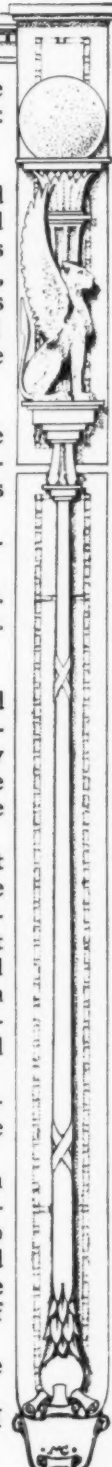
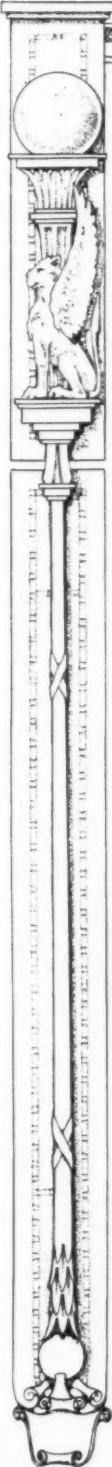
"Twenty-five dollars!" he was repeating to himself. "Twenty-five dollars! Of itself it is no use. To double it wouldn't serve me. If I could catch a number, full, it would help. That would be nine hundred dollars. And then—if they'll let me stake it all on the black, and I should win, I'll be—I'll be free!"

Once more the little white ball was spinning. Deliberately, without outward sign of agitation, he reached across the board and dropped the chip on the red square marked "13." Fortune had been against him, but now, he felt, it had turned, and he could give battle to tradition. What was regarded as unlucky should be to him the reverse. And so he stood with compressed lips, while the vibrating hum of the ball grew less sharp, turned eventually to a click as it struck the divisions between the numbers, dropped into a pocket and sprang out again, to settle, at last, after what had seemed to him no less than a lifetime, into—

"Thirteen—red—odd—low!" droned the croupier in his monotonous sing-song.

He had won. He was conscious of a buzz among the eager watchers. He heard the Englishman at his side say: "Good lad!" again. He saw the dealer exchange his yellow chip for a blue and add it to the thirty-five blues





he passed to him across the table, with: "Better have your old color, sir!" And then he heard himself asking: "Will you take the lot on an even bet?"

"Sure!" came the answer.

Now, his thirty-six chips, representing nine hundred dollars, were wagered on the black; and, again the ball was singing, while his heart pounded and the seconds dragged. Hope and despair played see-saw with him, but save for a deathly pallor his face gave no sign. His hands were very cold and his fingers tingled and twitched as he pressed them against the cloth of the table's edge.

"Single o—green."

The dealer was sweeping the table. Someone in the crowd sighed noisily at the relieved strain. The Englishman was running his fingers over his three stacks of chips which had escaped the wreck.

"I've had enough," he said, quietly. "That was a foolish play of yours, lad."

The "lad" smiled grimly. He was still very white. "It was a chance," he said, gamely, "and I took it. Thank you for making it possible."

"Oh, you were most welcome."

Business was over. The subject of King Edward had stuffed his fifteen hundred dollar roll into a trousers-pocket, and in cordial fashion had bidden everybody good-night. Then the crowd, some before him, some behind him, had begun filtering slowly through the doorway into the passage and down the stairs.

The young man who had taken a chance and lost was among the last to leave. When he reached the street a drizzling rain was falling, but in his preoccupation he was scarcely conscious of it. When, at length, he awoke to his surroundings, the rain had ceased and he was seated in saturated clothes on a bench in a public park, beside a man who was balancing, on his upturned palm, a revolver, the nicked barrel of which glinted in the light of a nearby lamp.

"My guess wasn't far from right," the man was saying. "I thought at first, though, you'd steer for the river."

The younger man, brought to a sudden realization that his attempt at self-destruction had been most unexpectedly and rather roughly frustrated, strove to gain a glimpse of the speaker's face; but while the hand and the weapon it balanced were plainly visible, the head and shoulders were obscured by the shadow of overhanging foliage.

"I don't suppose you're in the humor to thank me for my interference, are you?" the voice continued.

"It was my own fault, I dare say," was the reply. "I

should have made sure I was alone. I see now that I was altogether self-absorbed."

"I'm not so sure that you would have succeeded in any event. I was very sorry. I slipped into the shadow here on tiptoe while your back was turned."

He held out the revolver. "It belongs to you, you know," he said. "If you'll give me your word not to try to use it until you have heard what I have to say, I'll return it to you, now, Mr. —. It's Mr. Harned, isn't it?"

The young man started as the other pronounced his name. "You have the advantage of me," he said, his tone echoing his perplexity. "Have we met before?"

The sound of something very like a chuckle emanated from the darkness. "In one sense, no; in another, yes. Our social planes, if I may so express it, Mr. Harned, are not the same. I am a waiter."

"A waiter!" Harned gasped. "And yet you speak as a man of education."

"I am self-taught, and am observant. Though only a waiter, I am not without ambition."

The interest in this odd encounter had lifted the young man temporarily, at least, out of his depression.

"I have worked in many of the most prominent hotels of New York. When it was your habit to breakfast at the Prince Frederick, I, not infrequently, served your coffee and rolls."

"But, to-night?" was the next query. "How is it you recognize me? And I think you intimated that you suspected my intention to do away with myself."

"I stood behind you at Reilly's when you caught the falling chip. I watched you when you bet on the black, and your nine hundred dollars went back to the house."

"Ah!" murmured the young man. "I see. You, too, are a wooer of fickle fortune."

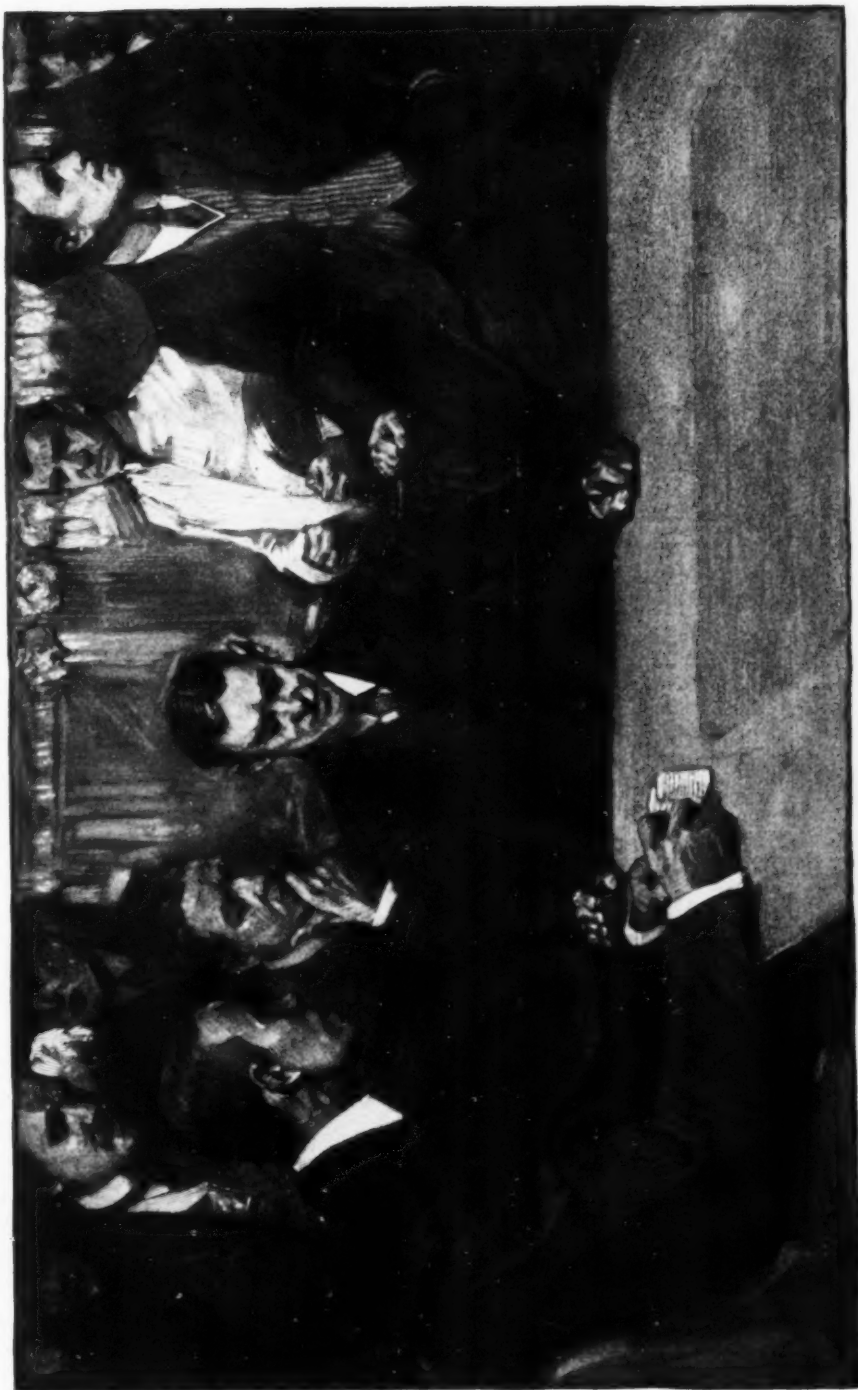
"No," rejoined the waiter. "I have no taste for hazard of that character. I simply follow my profession. The tips at Reilly's are often most generous."

"I beg your pardon," Harned hastened to atone.

"Pray don't mention it," the waiter returned. "Your supposition was quite natural. There are many in my line who are—I mean no offense, sir—shorter headed."

"But still," the youth pursued, "I have not learned your object in thwarting my purpose. What can it be to you whether I live or die? Since life has become for me not merely distasteful but impossible, I claim my right to end it, without molestation."

"God forbid that I should dispute your right, Mr. Harned. I have been instrumental in delaying you for a purpose which I make bold to confess is in large part selfish. Did I understand that you gave me your word?"



The "lad" smiled grimly. He was still very white

"To hear you out?"

"Yes."

"I will listen to you, gladly," agreed the young man in convincing accents. And even as he spoke his revolver was returned to his hand.

Then the waiter edged a few inches nearer, coming thus partially out of the shadow and revealing a sharply cut, aquiline profile. He wore a slouch hat, the brim of which, bent down in front, added to his silhouette a touch that was almost sinister.

"I shall endeavor," the waiter began in a low tone, "to be as clear, yet as brief as possible. To begin with, I am a member of a certain secret organization whose principles are communistic. We have decided that the millionaires who squander money for the gratification of their luxurious tastes, while all about them are hundreds of starving families, must be brought to a sense of their hideous unrighteousness. In the midst of their revelry and extravagance they shall be made to hear the voice of the people's disapproval and pause before the upraised hand of outraged poverty. Already," and his tone dropped now to a whisper, "we have chosen our victim and have pronounced sentence of death."

"If you will pardon the interruption," Harned broke in, a trifle irritably, "I see absolutely no connection—"

The communist stretched forth a detaining finger. "One moment only," he begged, "and I will enlighten you. From the new light which I observed came into your eyes when the chance was given you to-night to win a sum of money—approximately two thousand dollars—I ventured to conclude that with such an amount in hand, death might seem to you less desirable. Am I right or wrong?"

"That is neither here nor there," returned the young man, with kindling indignation. "If you fancy that for any sum you could name I would lend myself to your murderous project, you are grossly mistaken."

"A million pardons!" was the hasty response. "I had no such idea, my dear Mr. Harned. On the contrary, what I propose to you is—" once again his voice sank to a whisper, "to circumvent the plot which I have so roughly suggested."

"Circumvent it!" exclaimed the youth.

"That is my proposition."

"But you are of the organization which planned it! Am I to conclude, then, that you are a traitor to the cause?"

"Heaven forbid! In a general way I am most heartily in favor of the organization's methods. Had it chosen any other victim I would have worked heart and hand

to bring the sentence to successful issue. But—Ah! I cannot. No, no! Not he! Not he!"

The fellow seemed strangely moved, and for a little space his companion forbore to press him further. Then, while the waiter gazed abstractedly into the dark which lay beyond the path whereon they were seated, he inquired: "Are not you, yourself, then, the proper person to warn the party who is in peril?"

"That is a natural question," promptly replied the waiter. "Logically I am. Yet I cannot afford to do so. Should the victim be warned, I would at once be under suspicion, and my own life in all probability pay forfeit."

"But if I warn him? Will not the result be the same?"

"He is not to be warned. He is to be saved; and at the risk of your own life; which, seeing that you hold it so cheaply, can make little difference to you."

Harned smiled a hard smile under cover of the darkness. "But how will that advantage me?" he asked, a little cynically. "I prefer a secluded death in a quiet spot such as this is. Am I to change my plans for the whim of a communist who once served me with coffee and rolls?"

"If you succeed!" protested the other.

"If I succeed," the young man repeated. "What then?"

"You may ask what reward you choose and it will be paid. The chosen victim puts a high value on his life. The two thousand you need would be for him but a trifling recompense."

For a long moment Harned sat debating.

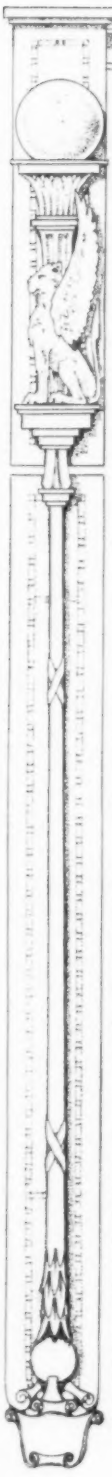
"I confess," he said at length, "that you have gained my interest, but I do not know that I can afford to wait. I had counted on being rid of my troubles before this. Already I see the banners of the new day's advance guard." And he pointed to where the Eastern heavens were turning from indigo to gray. "In a few hours I shall be quarry for the police. My crime will have been discovered and the two thousand dollars, I fear, of no avail."

"Is discovery, then, inevitable, and so close at hand?"

"Alas, yes."

"Even so, there are elements in favor of my proposition," argued the tempter. "If you die, you will die gloriously in the performance of an heroic deed. If you live, your accomplishment will temper public judgment in weighing your crime. It is a matter now of less than twenty-four hours. The time appointed is the night of the day just beginning. Until then I will guarantee to hide you effectually from the officers of the law."

"You forget," said Harned, half yielding, "that I am




not acquainted with the details of what you have in mind for me to perform. I know only that I am to adventure the saving of the life of the one plutocrat for whom you have, for some reason unknown to me, an abiding affection. Before coming to a decision I demand to be more fully informed."

"What you demand is only fair," replied the waiter, "and I am disposed to gratify your curiosity so far as prudence will admit. This is no place, however, for such revelations. As you see, the light is already spreading, and pedestrians are becoming more frequent. Here, we should risk being overheard. My lodgings are close at hand, and if you will do me the honor to accompany me, we can finish our conversation there without danger of betrayal."

In a little back room, up three flights, over an Eighth Avenue delicatessen shop, Harned spent his day. It was a cheap little room, scant of furniture, and dreary of outlook, but it was clean and tidy, and it held a low, straight-backed rocking-chair, in which he sat and rocked and ruminated while Higgins, his deliverer, lay stretched in slumber upon the narrow utilitarian cot. The details of the exploit in which he was to engage had been conveyed to Harned in a few brief sentences, and the peril of the undertaking had appealed to him. In all frankness he had admitted this, and Higgins' gratification over the fortuitous cast of events had been undisguised.

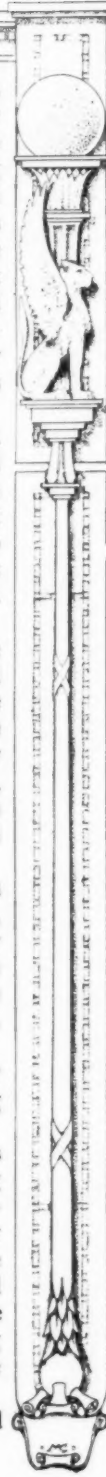

To prepare for the proposed adventure—that their nerves might be at least approximately fit—the waiter had prescribed a few hours of undisturbed sleep. But Harned had doubted that he could compose himself. Later, he had declared, when he had mentally revolved matters to a smoother complex he might possibly drowse. And thus it chanced that Higgins slumbered while the younger man turned the wheel of circumstance in thoughtful review.

It was only six months, now, since his world had begun to go awry. He dated it from the day of his engagement to Edith Varick. The happiness he knew then was such consummate happiness that it appalled him. Very soon it came to be tempered by a constant dread lest he lose it. And out of this dread grew a little company of haunting possibilities, of which Poverty was the chief. "When Poverty comes in the door"—The old saying rang daily in his ears. Of his financial resources Edith knew little or nothing. A liberal salary earned from a position of trust in the office of the leading millionaire banker of the metropolis enabled him to live generously. But generous living meant meager saving. Except for a few suburban lots and a handful





For a long moment Harned sat debating



of valueless stock-certificates bequeathed him by his deceased father he possessed little beyond his weekly stipend. Up to this period he had been deaf to the Lorelei of speculation. Now, however, the siren song of the ticker began to lure. By reason of his connection with the foremost house in Wall Street his advantages in this direction were exceptional. He selected a "sure thing," mortgaged his little property, and ran a straight course for the rocks. Later, he sold his suburban real estate to make good his diminished margins. Eventually he committed the first dishonest act of his career—he hypothecated two thousand dollars' worth of his employer's bonds.

Meanwhile his wedding-day had been set and a honeymoon itinerary arranged which included Hawaii and Japan. When this should be joyous date was a week distant his speculative end came. His account settled, he found himself possessed of a miserable two hundred dollars. And on the morrow a firm of public accountants were to begin their annual audit of the G. W. Gresham & Co. books.

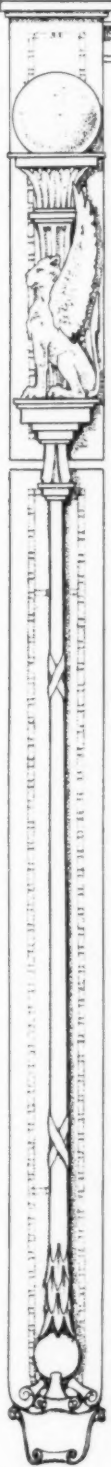
If, over night, he might swell two hundred to five thousand or thereabout, he would avoid exposure and his marriage could take place as planned, though the wedding tour must of necessity be abridged. A chance word, overheard, suggested Reilly's and roulette. They were the drowning man's straw. If they failed him, there was but one alternative. And so he had taken his revolver from the bureau drawer, loaded it, and dropped it into his coat-pocket.

Higgins rolled over, rubbed his eyes, and sat up on the cot's side. "You are, by now, I trust," he observed, "ready to take my place. Nature's sweet restorer, my dear sir, will do you a world of good. As for me, there are certain matters which demand my attention before nightfall. If you will permit me, I shall, upon my return, bring you in your dinner."

Harned rose, smiling. "May I encroach upon your favor, so far," he requested, "as to ask that you bring me an evening paper as well?"

When the waiter returned, bearing a tray in his hands and a paper under his arm, Harned was blinking from a three hours' nap. To Higgins he appeared refreshed; yet, at sight of the newspaper a nervous tremor seized him. If it contained tidings of his defalcation, he questioned whether any deed of valor on his part could rehabilitate him. With keenest anxiety, therefore, he turned the pages and scanned the columns. But finding nothing he sighed in relief, and applied himself to the contents of the napkin-covered tray.

It was now after five o'clock. At seven Higgins and

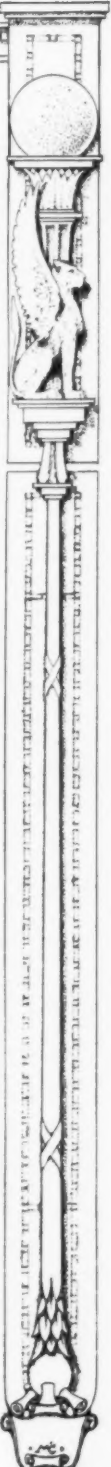


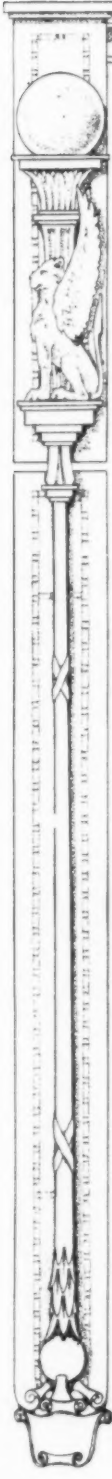
he were due at what is perhaps the most sumptuous art-studio in all Manhattan.

Not until Harned had exchanged his conventional suit of dark blue serge for an elaborate livery of olive green with buff trimmings and gold braided frogs, finishing the transformation with a white powdered wig and a yellow silk mask, did it occur to him that the studio event in which he was to play so important a part was the much-heralded costume-dinner in honor of the recently chosen and lately arrived director of the Metropolitan Institute of Archæology. For weeks the press of New York had teemed with fulsome references to it. It promised to be at once the most exclusive and most richly ornate affair of its kind ever given in America. Harned could well understand how such gross extravagance had aroused rebellion. He felt the sting of it, himself. If intrinsic worth counted he should be a guest at these tables spread with gold plate and priceless crystal. Instead of which, he was there as one of the servitors, gay in rich, but borrowed plumage.

But the pang was only momentary. The task to which he had agreed to lend himself grew in magnitude as he neared it, frowning tragically big and threatening. Eighteen hours ago it had seemed a little thing to touch the cold muzzle of a revolver to his temple and press the trigger. But this was different. Volition had no part in his present undertaking. The moment for action was to be of another's choosing. He must be constantly on the alert, or Death in hideous guise would claim not only himself but probably a score of others.

The strain intensified as the time approached for the opening of the doors from the main salon to the studio proper in which the tables waited. Already the three score serving men were at their places, ranged behind the high-backed, tapestried chairs. His post had been pointed out to him by Higgins, who was evidently acting as lieutenant to the maitre d'hotel. It was a conspicuous post, near the middle of the principal table—next, indeed, to the seat of honor. And he knew that the occupant of that chair, whosoever he might be, was the guest especially chosen for slaughter, yet the one man of all the hated plutocrats whom Higgins wished to spare. Then, just as the delay was seeming endless and his nerves stretched to breaking, the great folding doors parted and the company, masked and magnificent in the many hued, many fashioned garb of many lands and many ages, poured chattering and exhilarate, into the banquet hall, while from a hidden orchestra floated forth the stimulating harmony of a march measure.





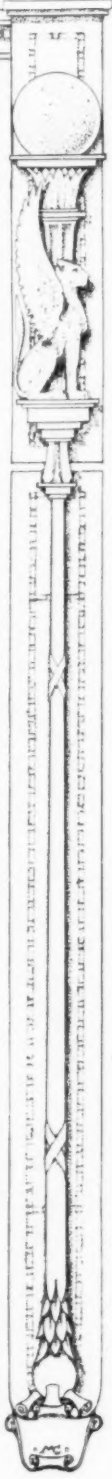
While the diners sought their assigned places the tensivity of Harold's ordeal had momentary relaxation. But it was momentary only, for almost immediately the identity of the plotters' proposed victim was revealed to him. The man who settled into the chair before him was unmistakable. Though, like all the rest, he wore a half-mask, it was no disguise. Harned knew his mouth and chin. And his costume, that of a Florentine noble of the Fifteenth Century—Lorenzo di Medici, the "Magnificent," to be exact—failed utterly to hide the characteristic lines of his all too corpulent figure. It was G. Washington Gresham, the millionaire banker and financier, who had been for years Harned's employer.

For one brief instant the young man was tempted to lean forward and whisper a word of warning. Yet what he knew he knew solely by reason of another man's trust and confidence. To raise an alarm would be to expose the one who had snatched him from the brink of suicide and given him a chance at self-redemption.

He set his teeth hard and lifted his chin and squared his shoulders. It was only all the more imperative now that he should carry out the original plan and that he should not fail. Behind him was an open window hung with heavy, brodered velvet hangings, slightly parted, and through the parting the passing breath of evening air entered, fanning his hot cheek, with revivifying caress. All at once his nervousness left him. A sure confidence came to him and prevailed. Instead of dreading the moment of action, he longed for it, keenly conscious of his ability to succeed. Now the room was all a-hum with the babble of many voices in conversation. For a little the music of the hidden orchestra was suspended. Harned stole a glance over the assemblage. He had never seen a more brilliant spectacle.

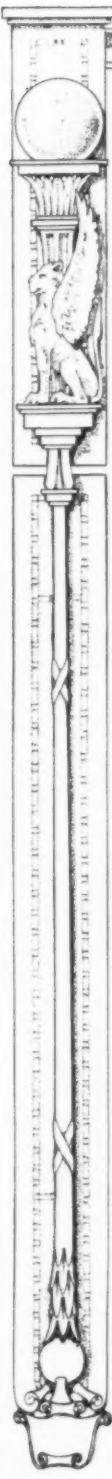
The rich silks, satins, and velvets of the costumes, together with their jeweled garniture, combined, under the glare of the many lights, to make a picture of kaleidoscopic variety. The bare necks, shoulders, and arms of many of the women gleamed white amid the riot of gay color. And the dominoes, of every imaginable tint and shade, added a not unpleasing touch of the biazarre. He could hardly realize that in the very midst of this, Death, violent and horrible, lurked ready to spring and to rend.

At that moment, someone brushing behind him, barely touched his elbow, and half turning his head he caught a glimpse of green and buff livery. Instantly his eye raced to the white gloved hands of the wearer, to find that they held a tray, and that on it, sliding from it, indeed, as it tilted toward Gresham's chair,





An eager group had gathered



was not a plate nor a bottle, but a little ominous looking black cylinder, three inches perhaps in diameter and probably once again that long.

To wheel swiftly about with uplifted arm and open palm was an act of impulse, unleavened by caution. It was well and nobly intended, but equilibrium has laws that will not be disobeyed, no matter what the stress of necessity, and as the cylinder rolled from the tray into Harned's raised hand, he felt his balance going and he knew he was pitching headlong to the floor, with a death dealing missile delicately adjusted to spread disaster at the slightest concussion.

In that infinitesimal fraction of a second thought worked hard and fast. A small black object of grim outline sped between the parted hangings of the open window, and as Harned crashed noisily to the floor behind the chairs of the new director and the King of American financiers, there arose from the court-yard of the building, five stories down, a detonation which shattered the plate glass of the studio windows and shocked to sudden, terrorized silence the brilliant company of masked diners gathered within.

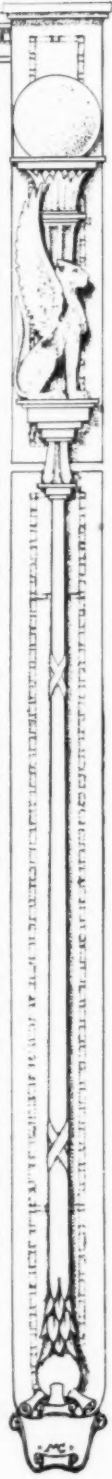
But the stillness lasted only for an instant, and was succeeded by confusion and hubbub that narrowly escaped panic. Women screamed and fainted. Men, tearing their masks from their faces, sprang to their feet and in hasty, choking words asked one another what had happened. Detectives, wearing the livery of servitors, pressed with one accord towards the windows and a large proportion of the men guests and the waiters, spurred by common impulse, followed.


Gresham, calmly self-possessed, was one of the first on his feet. Turning instinctively to where, behind him, he had heard a man fall before the noise of the explosion drowned all other sounds, he saw Harned, half-stunned by the force with which he struck the floor, struggling to his knees. He saw, too, a man, evidently one of the detectives, crowding into the space behind the table, his eyes fixed on the fallen Harned. But before the detective could get within arm's length of the young man, the millionaire, himself, had stooped to his assistance; had thrust his hands beneath Harned's arms and aided him to his feet.

"That's the fellow, sir! You've got him!" the detective cried, pushing to the fore. "Be careful, sir! He may knife you. Better let me handle him."

Gresham raised his hand in remonstrance. An eager group had gathered—a group that was each moment becoming more intense.

"I think," said the financier, "that you are in error. Unless I am very far amiss, I owe my life to this—"





With a quick motion he snatched the yellow silk mask from Harned's features—"to this young gentleman," he added.

Of course he recognized him, but he gave no sign then, save a twinkle of the eye, which Harned, and Harned alone, saw, for the King of Financiers was master of his emotions.

Somebody behind him was telling someone:

"That young waiter threw a bomb."

Gresham heard it and whisked about. "'Intercepted' is the proper word," he corrected. "It is all quite clear to me. There are those who may say I have eyes in the back of my head. While this is not literally true, I have a faculty which answers as well. Has it not occurred to you that a bomb thrown here would have exploded here, had someone not been brave enough and alert enough to prevent it?"

Turning back he took Harned's hand, nervously cold, in both his own, pressing it warmly.


"You have done well, my boy," he said. Then he addressed the staring, nonplussed detective: "Meanwhile, it seems, the bomb thrower is to go unscathed, even unfollowed." And as the detective slunk away, Gresham, yet holding Harned's hand, spoke to the Director of the Metropolitan Institute who, still masked, stood beside him: "There is a common impression, my dear Firth, that I never go abroad without a body guard. Like most common impressions this is, technically, incorrect. Yet I find that if I am ever in peril, there is always a good friend at my back. This has happened not once, but often, and the rule is invariable. The young man here is one of the cleverest, most efficient young men of my office staff. He is soon to be married, and yet he was willing to risk his own life to save mine. Is there any reward too great for such devotion?"

Harned, overhearing this, rejoiced in spirit.

"A month or more ago," the millionaire continued, "I sold short for his account five thousand shares of National Salt. Already it shows him a profit of fifty thousand dollars or more. It is to be a little wedding-present."

The young man gasped, and would have drawn away his hand, smitten suddenly as he was by conscience. But the great financier, gripping it all the more tightly, turned smiling eyes upon him.

"We missed you at the office to-day," he said kindly. "There were certain securities which the accountants could not find. Had you been there, you could have located them instantly. However, that can wait. When you return from your honeymoon will be ample time."



Emotionally wrung by this abrupt and unexpected revelation Harned's confusion and embarrassment were almost painful. A score or more overheard every word of Gresham's and their eyes were focused upon the young man. Falteringly he began to pave the way for his own escape.

"If, sir," he said, "you will be so good—"

But it was now the turn of the new Director—the guest of honor.

"I wish to congratulate you before you go," he began, taking the hand the financier had at last released. He was a large man, very tall and massively proportioned, and he wore the costume of an East India potentate, rich in jeweled adornment. "You have a quick eye and a quick hand, lad. This is the second opportunity I have had of observing with what facility you catch falling objects."

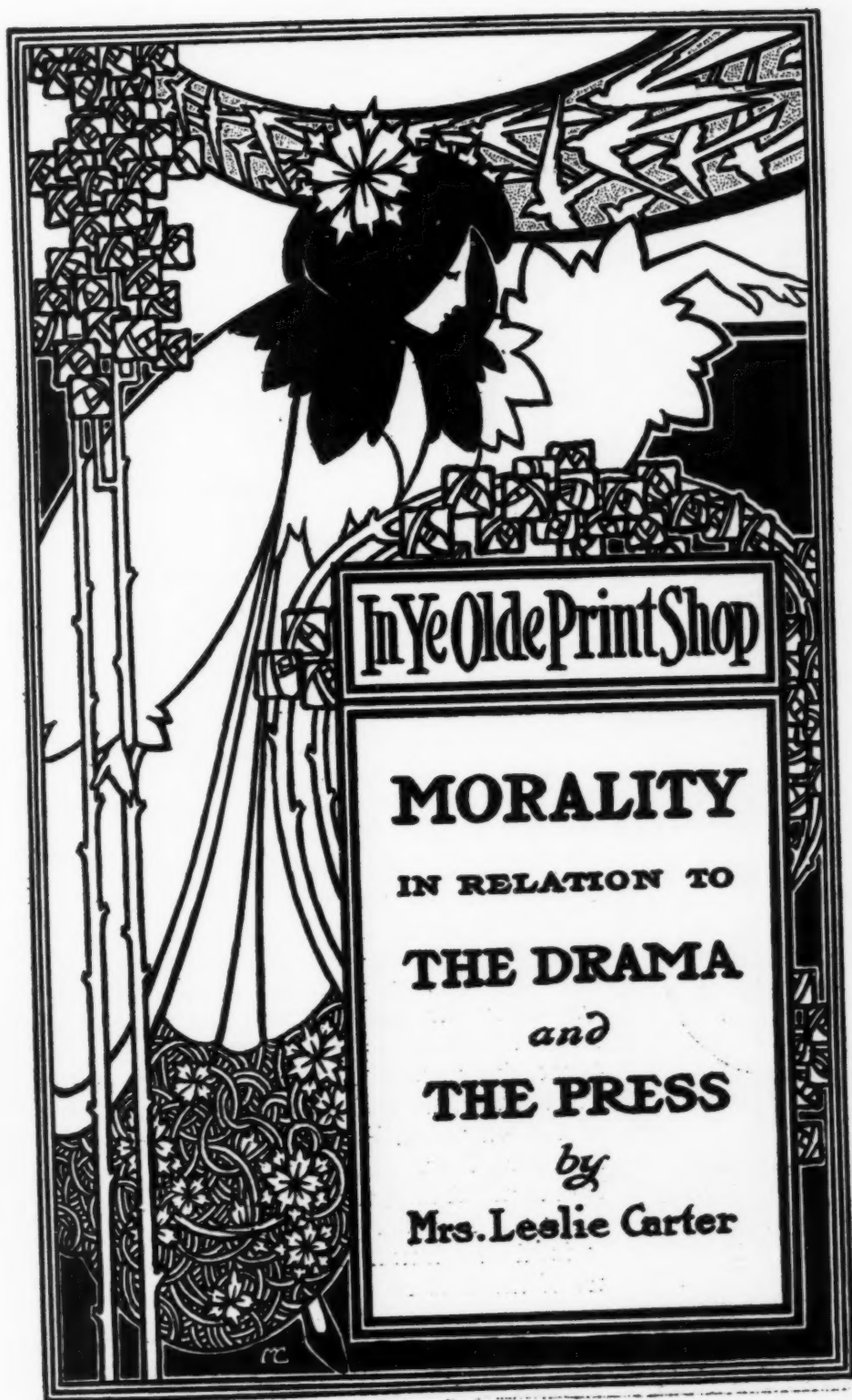
As he spoke, he quietly removed his mask, and Harned, in amazement, recognized the Englishman of the roulette-table at Reilly's.

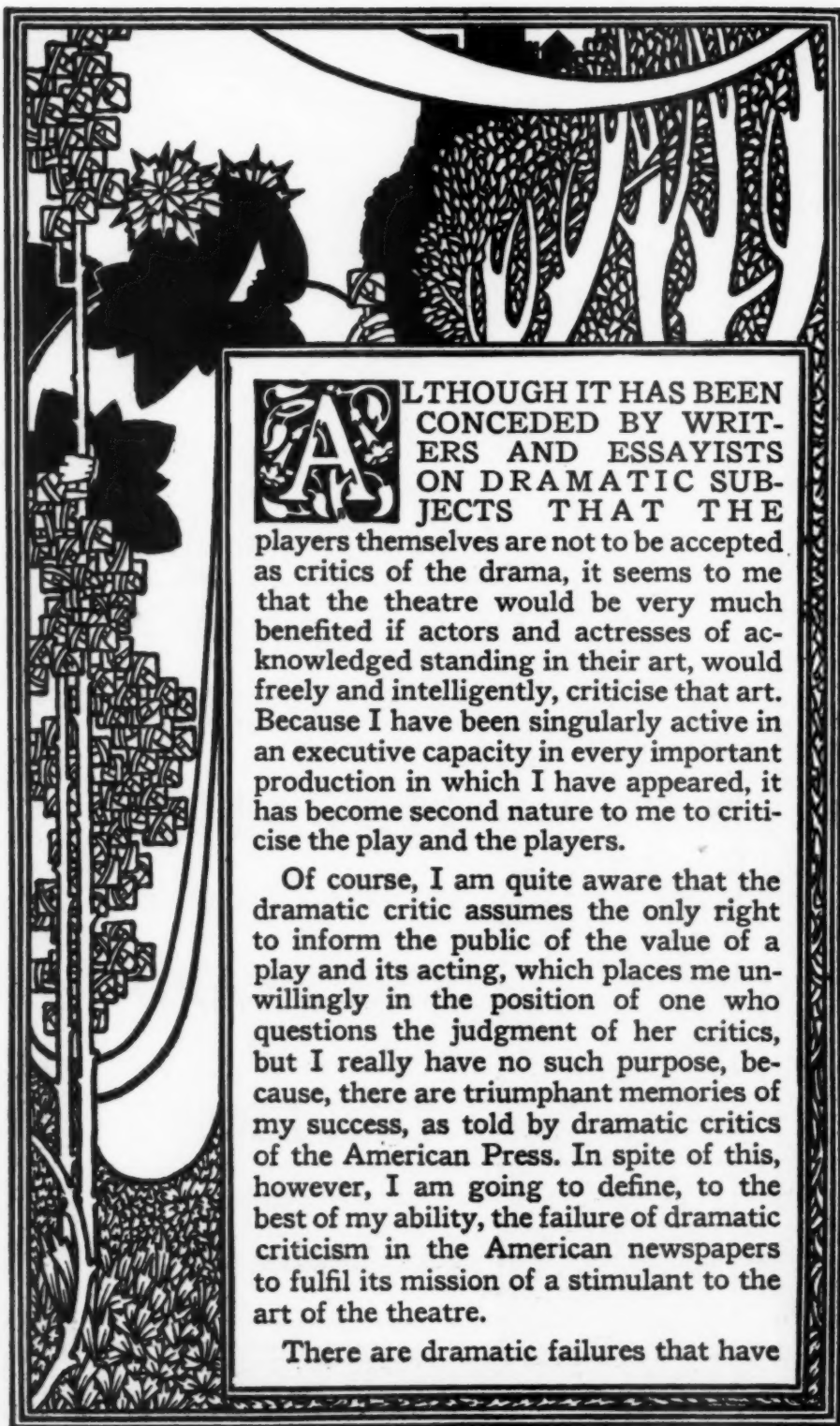
But at the same moment his attention was distracted. Higgins, unmasked, was bowing obsequiously to the great banker, and the great banker was saying: "Higgins! Of all men! How much of this intercession do I owe to you?"

"Little, beyond the capture of the would-be assassin, sir," was the reply. "I learned of the plot last night, while showing Mr. Firth about New York, but I fear I should have failed had it not been for Mr. Harned's assistance."



"Higgins! Of all men!"



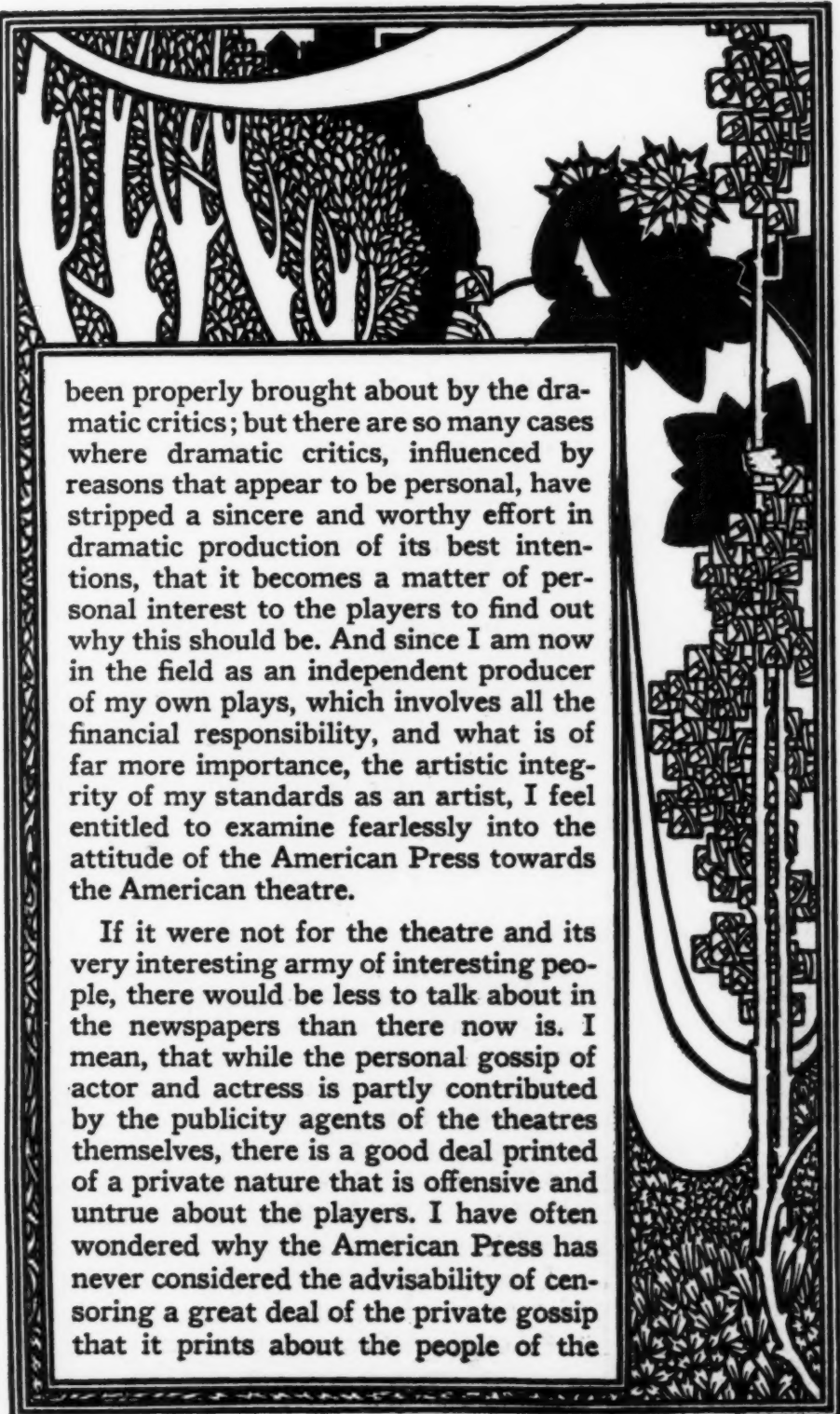


ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN
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players themselves are not to be accepted as critics of the drama, it seems to me that the theatre would be very much benefited if actors and actresses of acknowledged standing in their art, would freely and intelligently, criticise that art. Because I have been singularly active in an executive capacity in every important production in which I have appeared, it has become second nature to me to criticise the play and the players.

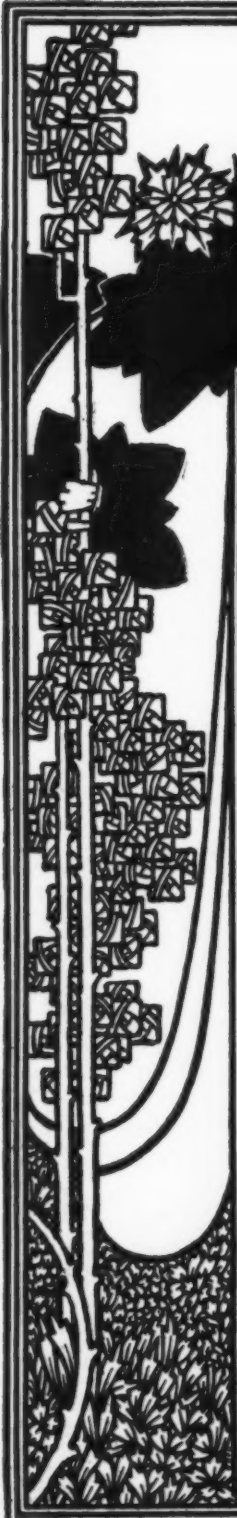
Of course, I am quite aware that the dramatic critic assumes the only right to inform the public of the value of a play and its acting, which places me unwillingly in the position of one who questions the judgment of her critics, but I really have no such purpose, because, there are triumphant memories of my success, as told by dramatic critics of the American Press. In spite of this, however, I am going to define, to the best of my ability, the failure of dramatic criticism in the American newspapers to fulfil its mission of a stimulant to the art of the theatre.

There are dramatic failures that have



been properly brought about by the dramatic critics; but there are so many cases where dramatic critics, influenced by reasons that appear to be personal, have stripped a sincere and worthy effort in dramatic production of its best intentions, that it becomes a matter of personal interest to the players to find out why this should be. And since I am now in the field as an independent producer of my own plays, which involves all the financial responsibility, and what is of far more importance, the artistic integrity of my standards as an artist, I feel entitled to examine fearlessly into the attitude of the American Press towards the American theatre.

If it were not for the theatre and its very interesting army of interesting people, there would be less to talk about in the newspapers than there now is. I mean, that while the personal gossip of actor and actress is partly contributed by the publicity agents of the theatres themselves, there is a good deal printed of a private nature that is offensive and untrue about the players. I have often wondered why the American Press has never considered the advisability of censoring a great deal of the private gossip that it prints about the people of the

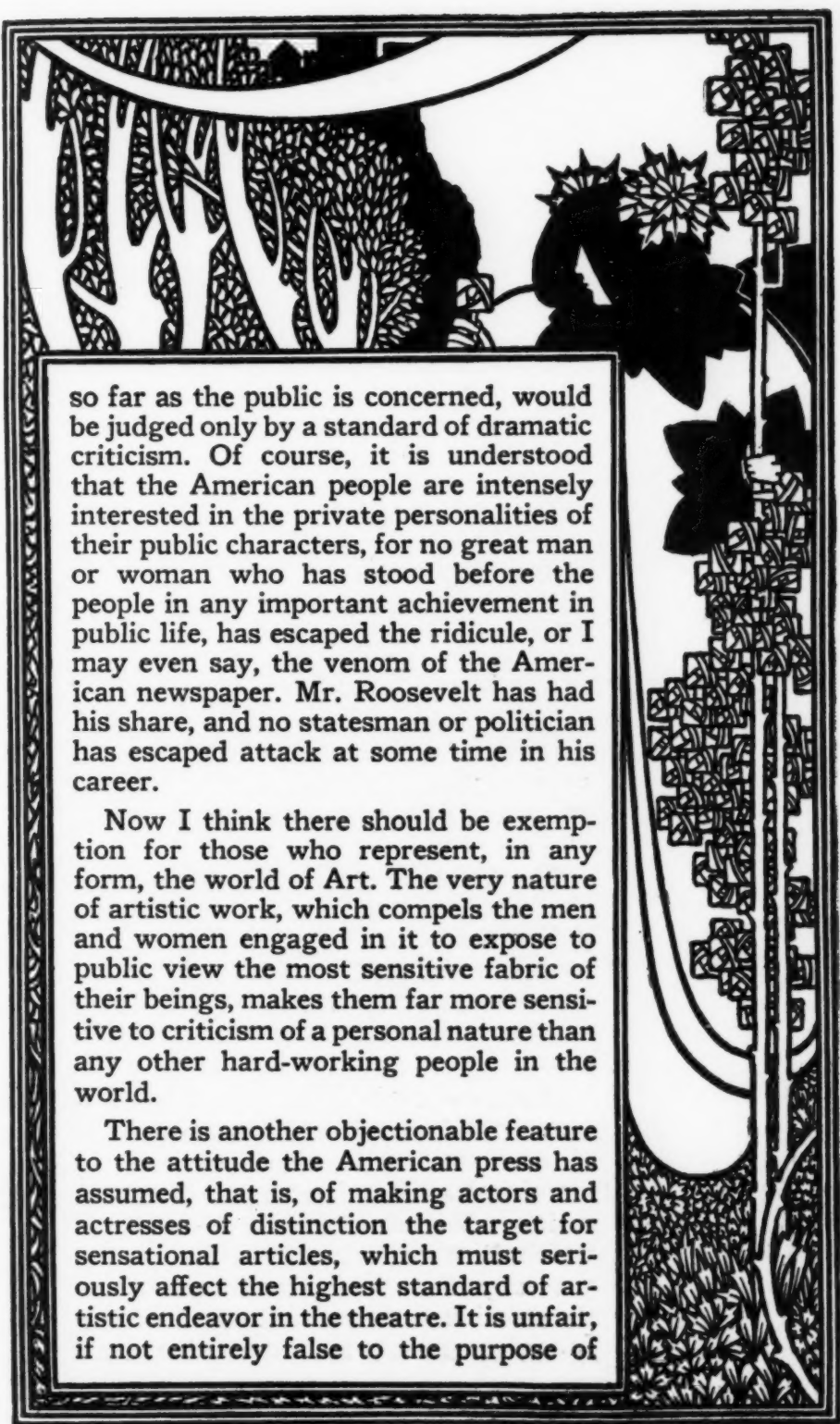


stage. Much of it that is true makes mighty poor reading, and much of it that is charming and instructive is printed in small type in out of the way corners of the paper.

I have also often wondered, possibly with other unfortunates who find themselves in the limelight of promiscuous publicity, why there should be no way of escape from misquotation. It is my custom to make allowances for the mistakes of my own staff, but I wish it were possible to find myself in as frank a position toward the newspapers as I hold toward my own publicity agent.

If the public only knew how many times I have opened a newspaper and found in it personal criticism of a private nature, written by persons who obviously have no actual knowledge of the facts they appear to believe, they would better understand why I occasionally give a poor performance. The personal criticism of actors and actresses may make what newspapers call "good reading," but its effect upon those who are the victims of the sensational notices, is about the same as any other personal insult would be.

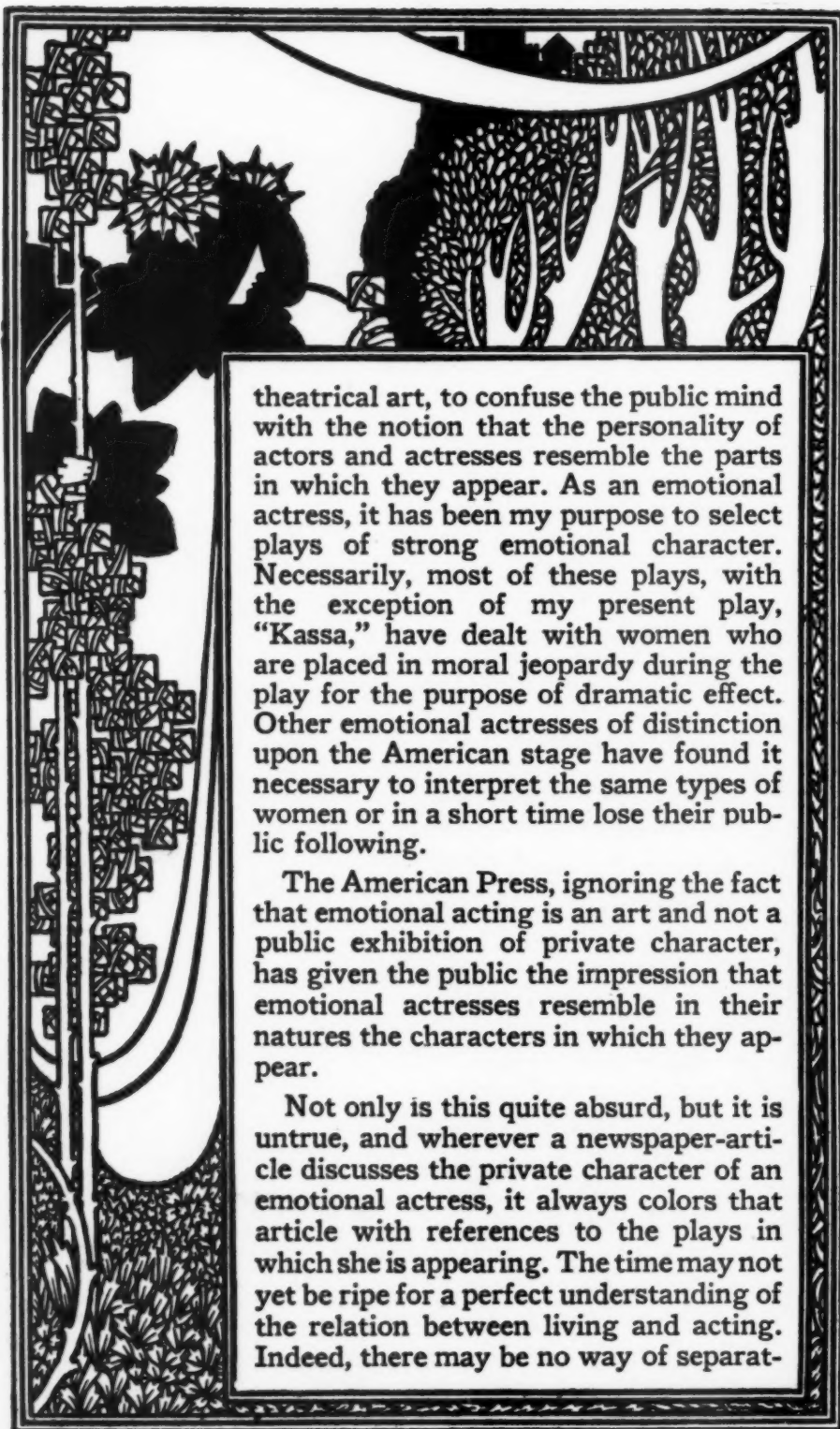
I should like to see the private affairs of actors and actresses held sacred by the American Press, so that their lives,



so far as the public is concerned, would be judged only by a standard of dramatic criticism. Of course, it is understood that the American people are intensely interested in the private personalities of their public characters, for no great man or woman who has stood before the people in any important achievement in public life, has escaped the ridicule, or I may even say, the venom of the American newspaper. Mr. Roosevelt has had his share, and no statesman or politician has escaped attack at some time in his career.

Now I think there should be exemption for those who represent, in any form, the world of Art. The very nature of artistic work, which compels the men and women engaged in it to expose to public view the most sensitive fabric of their beings, makes them far more sensitive to criticism of a personal nature than any other hard-working people in the world.

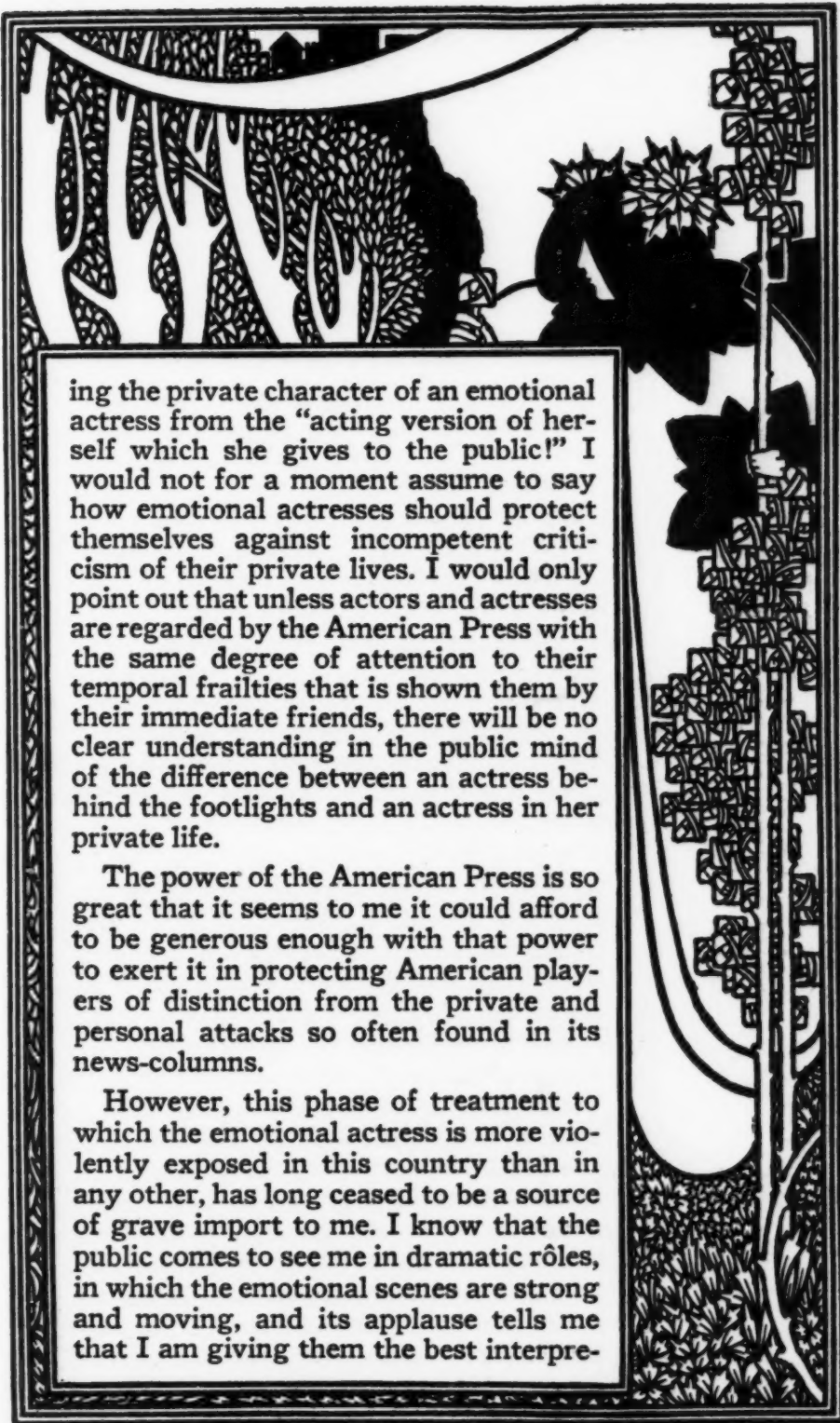
There is another objectionable feature to the attitude the American press has assumed, that is, of making actors and actresses of distinction the target for sensational articles, which must seriously affect the highest standard of artistic endeavor in the theatre. It is unfair, if not entirely false to the purpose of



theatrical art, to confuse the public mind with the notion that the personality of actors and actresses resemble the parts in which they appear. As an emotional actress, it has been my purpose to select plays of strong emotional character. Necessarily, most of these plays, with the exception of my present play, "Kassa," have dealt with women who are placed in moral jeopardy during the play for the purpose of dramatic effect. Other emotional actresses of distinction upon the American stage have found it necessary to interpret the same types of women or in a short time lose their public following.

The American Press, ignoring the fact that emotional acting is an art and not a public exhibition of private character, has given the public the impression that emotional actresses resemble in their natures the characters in which they appear.

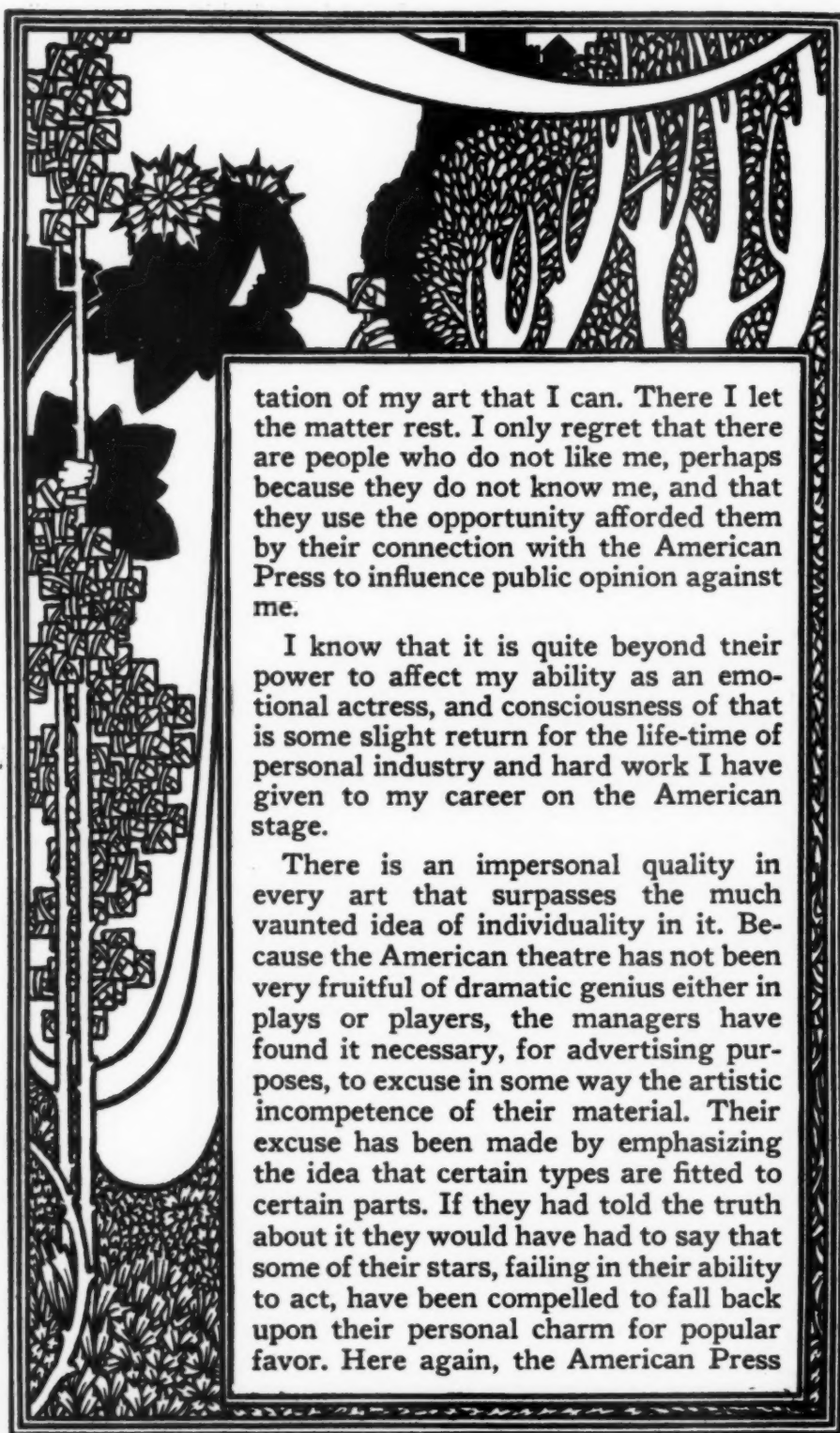
Not only is this quite absurd, but it is untrue, and wherever a newspaper-article discusses the private character of an emotional actress, it always colors that article with references to the plays in which she is appearing. The time may not yet be ripe for a perfect understanding of the relation between living and acting. Indeed, there may be no way of separat-



ing the private character of an emotional actress from the "acting version of herself which she gives to the public!" I would not for a moment assume to say how emotional actresses should protect themselves against incompetent criticism of their private lives. I would only point out that unless actors and actresses are regarded by the American Press with the same degree of attention to their temporal frailties that is shown them by their immediate friends, there will be no clear understanding in the public mind of the difference between an actress behind the footlights and an actress in her private life.

The power of the American Press is so great that it seems to me it could afford to be generous enough with that power to exert it in protecting American players of distinction from the private and personal attacks so often found in its news-columns.


However, this phase of treatment to which the emotional actress is more violently exposed in this country than in any other, has long ceased to be a source of grave import to me. I know that the public comes to see me in dramatic rôles, in which the emotional scenes are strong and moving, and its applause tells me that I am giving them the best interpre-



tation of my art that I can. There I let the matter rest. I only regret that there are people who do not like me, perhaps because they do not know me, and that they use the opportunity afforded them by their connection with the American Press to influence public opinion against me.

I know that it is quite beyond their power to affect my ability as an emotional actress, and consciousness of that is some slight return for the life-time of personal industry and hard work I have given to my career on the American stage.

There is an impersonal quality in every art that surpasses the much vaunted idea of individuality in it. Because the American theatre has not been very fruitful of dramatic genius either in plays or players, the managers have found it necessary, for advertising purposes, to excuse in some way the artistic incompetence of their material. Their excuse has been made by emphasizing the idea that certain types are fitted to certain parts. If they had told the truth about it they would have had to say that some of their stars, failing in their ability to act, have been compelled to fall back upon their personal charm for popular favor. Here again, the American Press



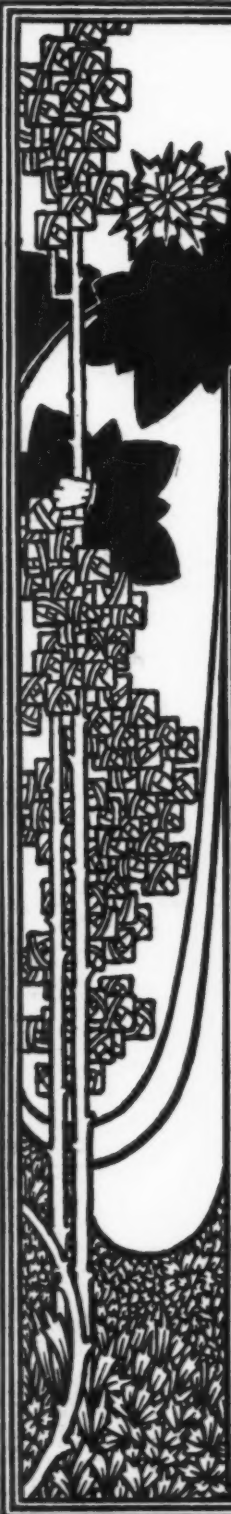
has consciously contributed to the public mind an entirely false estimate of the very serious and difficult matter of acting.

There are obvious reasons why the American Press is ever willing to give indiscriminate praise to very poor and colorless performances at the theatre. It is quite unnecessary for me to point them out.

The pity is that the results of a few instances where dramatic critics have dared to express themselves with artistic sincerity, to the discomfort, of course, of some well advertised play or player, show how impossible sincere criticism is. There are specific instances of this sort, well known to everybody in the profession, where the critics have been dismissed from their positions because they were too honest.

Think of it, discharged from their newspapers because they wrote the truth!

This fact is very significant, because, if the standard of dramatic criticism in the American Press remains at so low an ebb that the critics themselves, instead of strengthening their own integrity of criticism, are being starved while performing before their readers, then the American players and the American

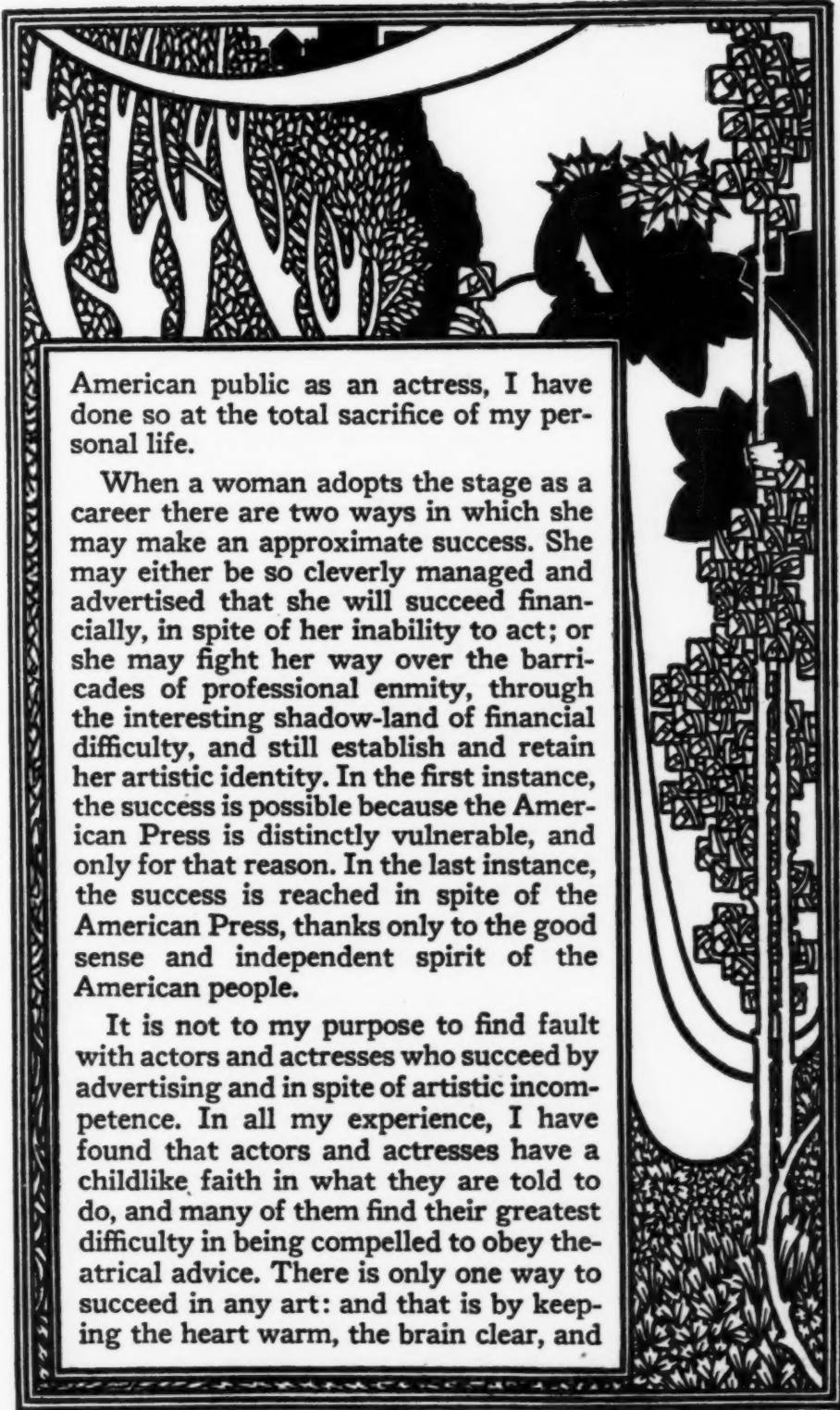


plays are at once placed in a very false position.

Thank heaven, however, we have a big country here, full of intelligent people, who are gradually learning to think for themselves. I say gradually, when perhaps the caution was not necessary. For there is a never failing and enthusiastic support from the American public for a really deserving performance. Yes, in most cases, in spite of the American Press, not because of it.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood in anything I have said or am going to say later; nor that anything I say may sound as if it were a personal rebuke of my acquaintances and friends who write for the newspapers and magazines. The whole purpose of this article will be destroyed were such to be assumed, for I am merely exchanging, in the friendliest way, some of our differences from the artistic standpoint.

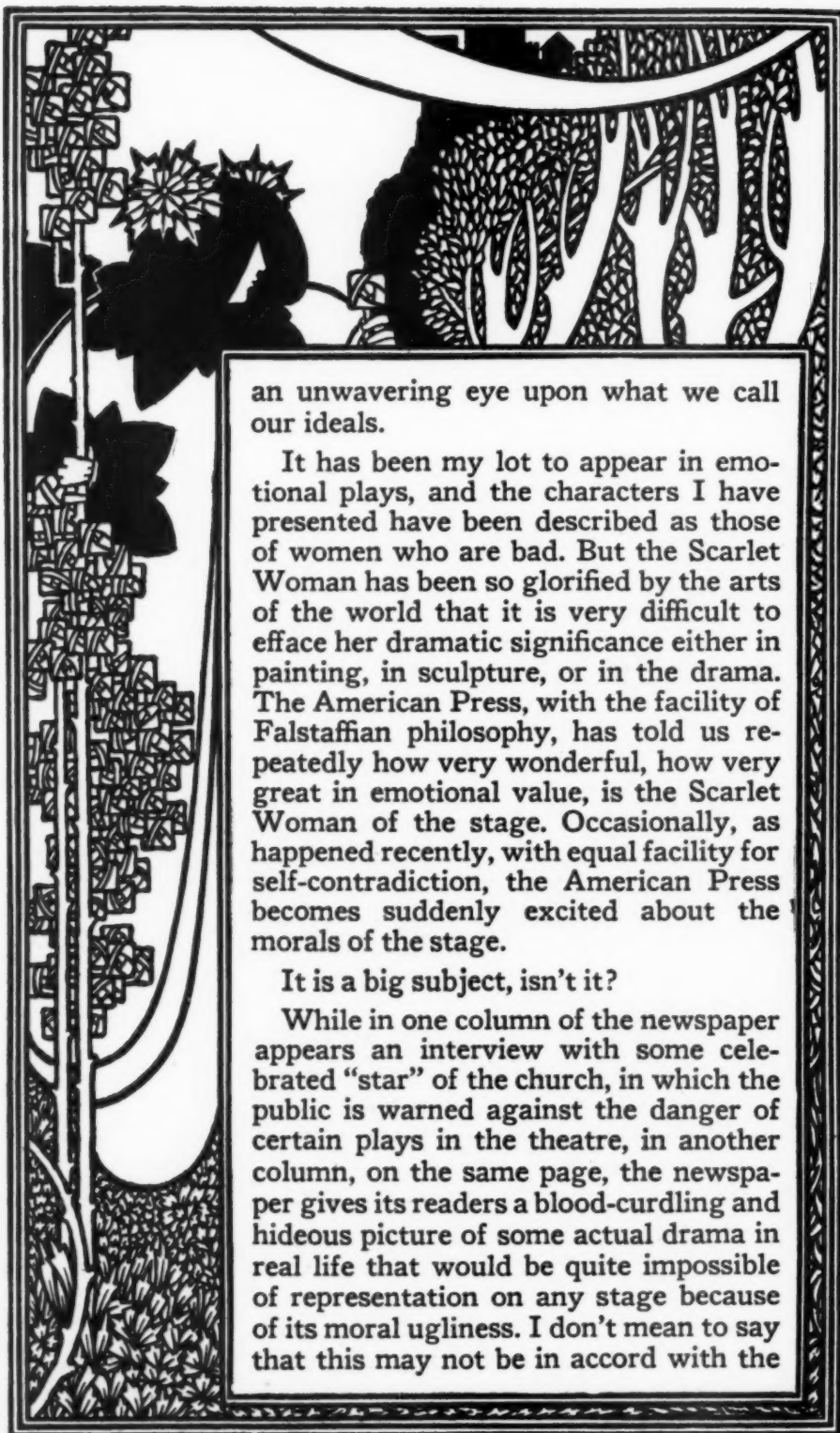
Only the most sincere devotion to the highest standards of the American theatre has inspired me to discuss the stage for publication, at all. People say that I am a difficult and erratic woman, but there can be no uncertain opinion as to my relation to the art of acting, for it is a matter of public record, that in all the years I have given of my best to the



American public as an actress, I have done so at the total sacrifice of my personal life.

When a woman adopts the stage as a career there are two ways in which she may make an approximate success. She may either be so cleverly managed and advertised that she will succeed financially, in spite of her inability to act; or she may fight her way over the barricades of professional enmity, through the interesting shadow-land of financial difficulty, and still establish and retain her artistic identity. In the first instance, the success is possible because the American Press is distinctly vulnerable, and only for that reason. In the last instance, the success is reached in spite of the American Press, thanks only to the good sense and independent spirit of the American people.

It is not to my purpose to find fault with actors and actresses who succeed by advertising and in spite of artistic incompetence. In all my experience, I have found that actors and actresses have a childlike faith in what they are told to do, and many of them find their greatest difficulty in being compelled to obey theatrical advice. There is only one way to succeed in any art: and that is by keeping the heart warm, the brain clear, and

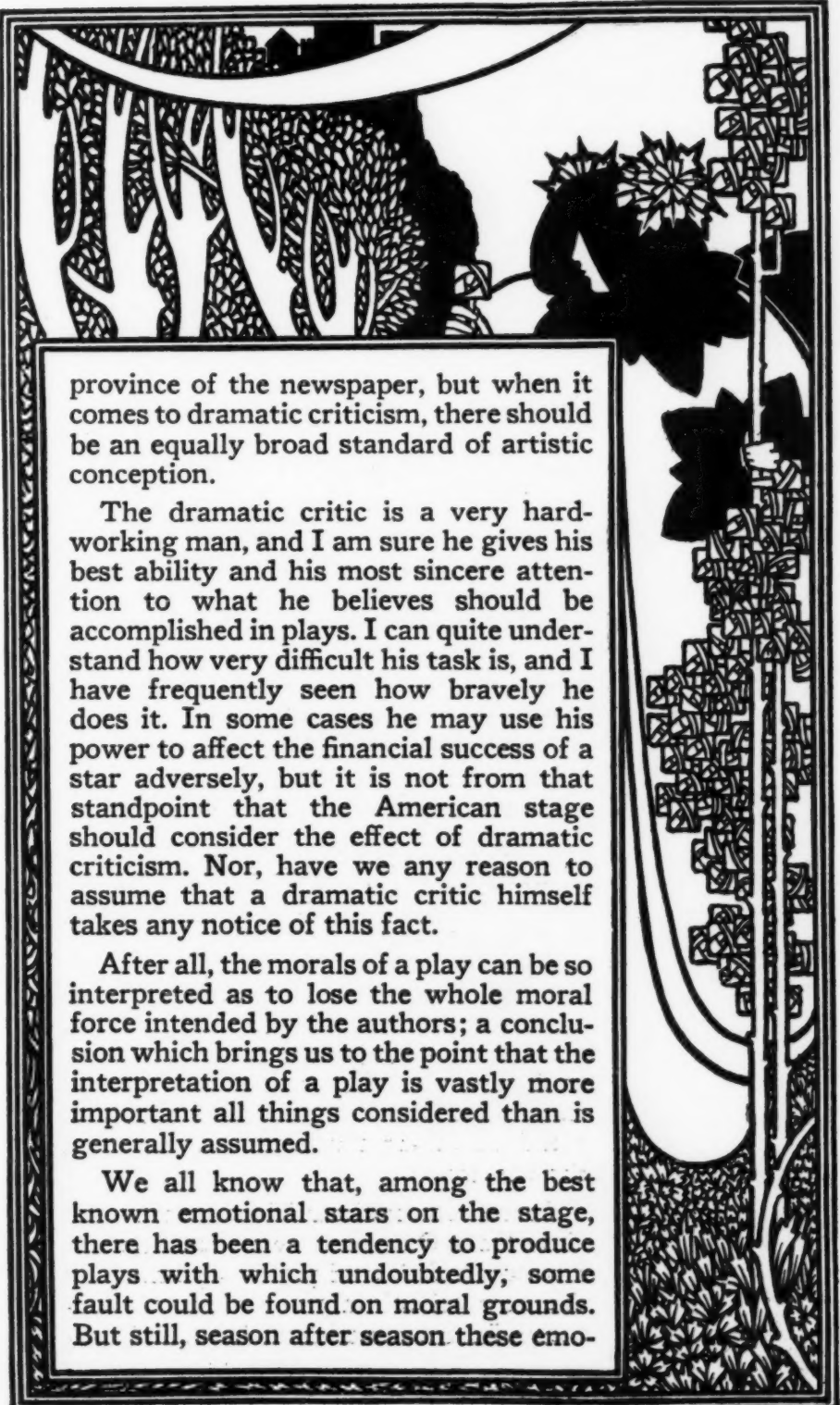


an unwavering eye upon what we call our ideals.

It has been my lot to appear in emotional plays, and the characters I have presented have been described as those of women who are bad. But the Scarlet Woman has been so glorified by the arts of the world that it is very difficult to efface her dramatic significance either in painting, in sculpture, or in the drama. The American Press, with the facility of Falstaffian philosophy, has told us repeatedly how very wonderful, how very great in emotional value, is the Scarlet Woman of the stage. Occasionally, as happened recently, with equal facility for self-contradiction, the American Press becomes suddenly excited about the morals of the stage.

It is a big subject, isn't it?

While in one column of the newspaper appears an interview with some celebrated "star" of the church, in which the public is warned against the danger of certain plays in the theatre, in another column, on the same page, the newspaper gives its readers a blood-curdling and hideous picture of some actual drama in real life that would be quite impossible of representation on any stage because of its moral ugliness. I don't mean to say that this may not be in accord with the

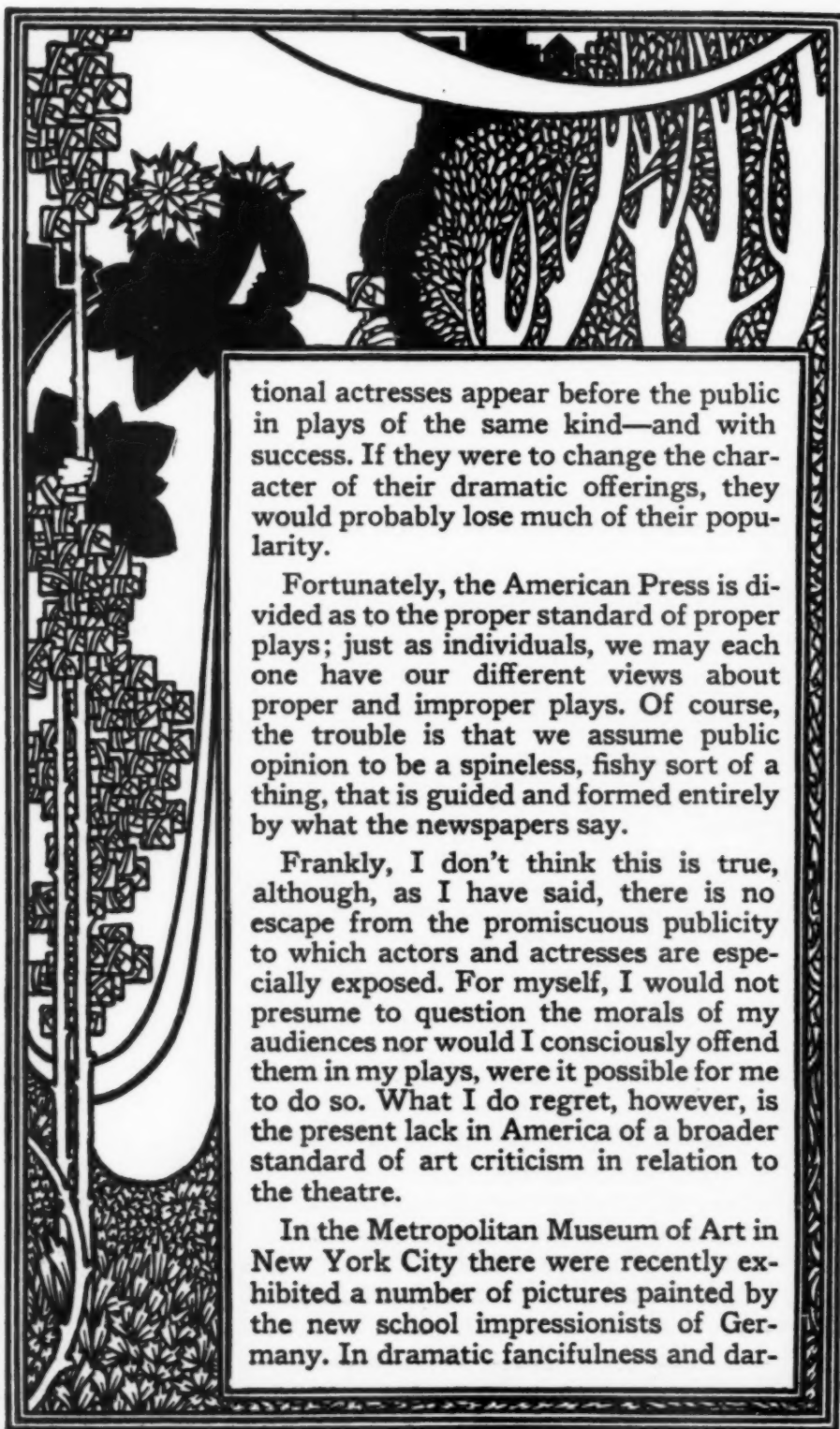


province of the newspaper, but when it comes to dramatic criticism, there should be an equally broad standard of artistic conception.

The dramatic critic is a very hard-working man, and I am sure he gives his best ability and his most sincere attention to what he believes should be accomplished in plays. I can quite understand how very difficult his task is, and I have frequently seen how bravely he does it. In some cases he may use his power to affect the financial success of a star adversely, but it is not from that standpoint that the American stage should consider the effect of dramatic criticism. Nor, have we any reason to assume that a dramatic critic himself takes any notice of this fact.

After all, the morals of a play can be so interpreted as to lose the whole moral force intended by the authors; a conclusion which brings us to the point that the interpretation of a play is vastly more important all things considered than is generally assumed.

We all know that, among the best known emotional stars on the stage, there has been a tendency to produce plays with which undoubtedly, some fault could be found on moral grounds. But still, season after season these emo-

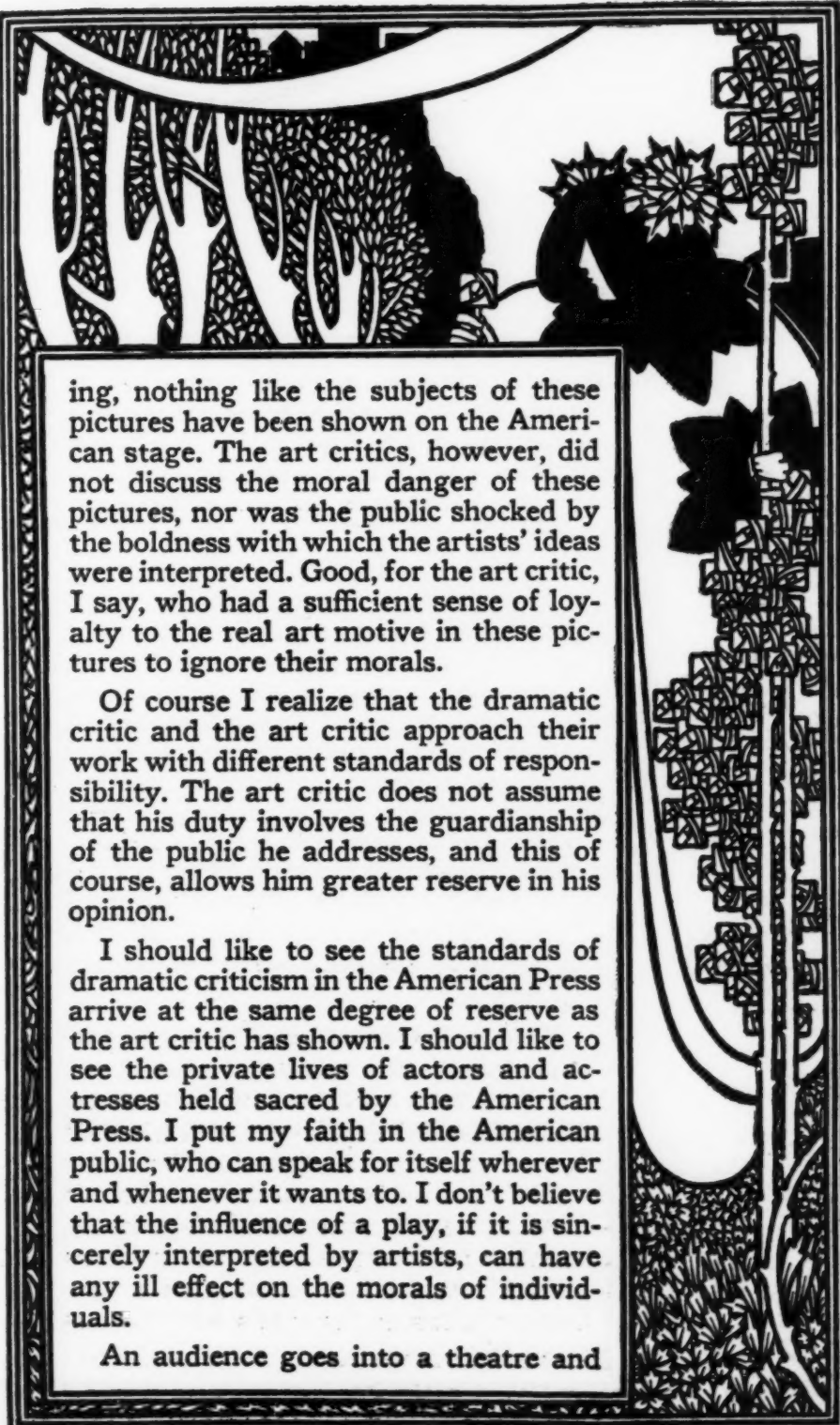


tional actresses appear before the public in plays of the same kind—and with success. If they were to change the character of their dramatic offerings, they would probably lose much of their popularity.

Fortunately, the American Press is divided as to the proper standard of proper plays; just as individuals, we may each one have our different views about proper and improper plays. Of course, the trouble is that we assume public opinion to be a spineless, fishy sort of a thing, that is guided and formed entirely by what the newspapers say.

Frankly, I don't think this is true, although, as I have said, there is no escape from the promiscuous publicity to which actors and actresses are especially exposed. For myself, I would not presume to question the morals of my audiences nor would I consciously offend them in my plays, were it possible for me to do so. What I do regret, however, is the present lack in America of a broader standard of art criticism in relation to the theatre.

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City there were recently exhibited a number of pictures painted by the new school impressionists of Germany. In dramatic fancifulness and dar-

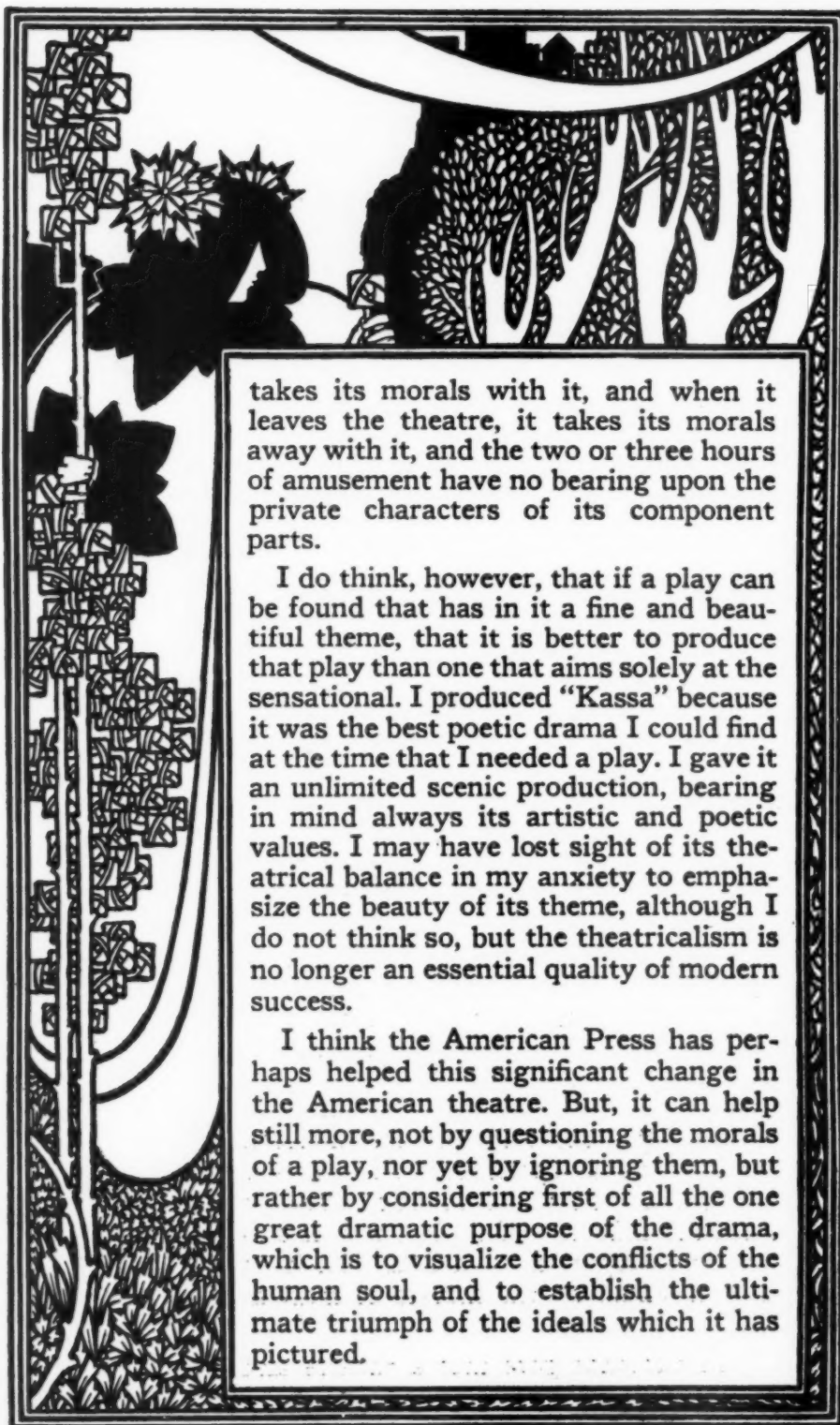


ing, nothing like the subjects of these pictures have been shown on the American stage. The art critics, however, did not discuss the moral danger of these pictures, nor was the public shocked by the boldness with which the artists' ideas were interpreted. Good, for the art critic, I say, who had a sufficient sense of loyalty to the real art motive in these pictures to ignore their morals.

Of course I realize that the dramatic critic and the art critic approach their work with different standards of responsibility. The art critic does not assume that his duty involves the guardianship of the public he addresses, and this of course, allows him greater reserve in his opinion.

I should like to see the standards of dramatic criticism in the American Press arrive at the same degree of reserve as the art critic has shown. I should like to see the private lives of actors and actresses held sacred by the American Press. I put my faith in the American public, who can speak for itself wherever and whenever it wants to. I don't believe that the influence of a play, if it is sincerely interpreted by artists, can have any ill effect on the morals of individuals.

An audience goes into a theatre and



takes its morals with it, and when it leaves the theatre, it takes its morals away with it, and the two or three hours of amusement have no bearing upon the private characters of its component parts.

I do think, however, that if a play can be found that has in it a fine and beautiful theme, that it is better to produce that play than one that aims solely at the sensational. I produced "Kassa" because it was the best poetic drama I could find at the time that I needed a play. I gave it an unlimited scenic production, bearing in mind always its artistic and poetic values. I may have lost sight of its theatrical balance in my anxiety to emphasize the beauty of its theme, although I do not think so, but the theatricalism is no longer an essential quality of modern success.

I think the American Press has perhaps helped this significant change in the American theatre. But, it can help still more, not by questioning the morals of a play, nor yet by ignoring them, but rather by considering first of all the one great dramatic purpose of the drama, which is to visualize the conflicts of the human soul, and to establish the ultimate triumph of the ideals which it has pictured.



Alice

The Substitute

BY JAMES BARNES

Author of "The Clutch of Circumstance," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

YOU'RE a nice one for a pal," remarked Henderson, as Gibbs slid into his seat at the table. "Why didn't you tell me you knew who they were?"

"But I didn't see 'em until just as they were getting ready to go."

Mason Gibbs spread his napkin over his knees again and helped himself to the salad.

"But you must have noticed that I did," rejoined Henderson, stabbing at an

elusive piece of celery. "Of all the selfish, secretive, miserly beasts you are the—"

"Why, you silly ass, I knew you were watching somebody, but you never even hinted for me to turn around. I supposed it was a feminine from the way the small amount of attention you ever pay to anybody's conversation but your own, disappeared entirely— I hate these restaurants with mirrors, anyhow—Too much

vinegar in this dressing, don't you think?"

"You never look at anything but your plate," proclaimed Henderson, lighting a cigaret. "I like a visual *obligato* with my food; it is conducive to thoughts above the midriff. But who were they? Strangers to me."

"Not to me," asserted Mason Gibbs; "I've known 'em a long time."

"Humph—what did they say?"

"They said they recognized me as soon as they came in, and—"

"You have a very individual look to the back of your head," cut in Henderson. "Any one could tell you a mile out at sea. Why don't you wear a *toupee*? I think it would be both charitable and becoming."

Mason Gibbs grunted, disdaining to answer.

There had not been the slightest ill humor in any of the foregoing. It was the usual method they employed for the exchange of ideas when they felt at peace with the world and had no real ground for argument. It apparently did no harm to their sense of companionship and most certainly served up amusement for their friends.

"Rotten coffee," said Mr. Gibbs at last.

"Humph, don't see how you can taste it with all that sugar in it. Don't you know sugar has a tendency to gout and adipose tissue?"

Mr. Henderson studied his companion's rather bulky form and shook his head deprecatingly.

Mr. Gibbs changed the subject.

"Don't you think she was pretty—um—the loveliest eyes!"

"Both of them were quite—er—good looking—" returned Henderson nonchalantly, surveying the room. "Didn't they ask you who you were with?"

"No," puffed Mr. Gibbs, smothering a chortle, "they asked me if I was alone."

"That will do for you," grinned Henderson weakly. "I'll score you one. But don't be a chump. Tell me her—er—their names."

"Now, my dear Johnnie, if I should mention a name your mind would be a

desert for the rest of the evening. You'd be doing nothing but repeating it under your breath for fear you'd forget it—until you landed it in that little red book that, thank heaven, you've forgotten to bring with you. Besides, I don't want that name to appear in such a graveyard of neglected opportunities."

"*Damit, Ich nichts vergesse*," quoted Henderson, smiling complacently.

"You needn't be profane about it."

"I wasn't. That was German. It was impolite in me not to remember your untutored mind."

"Let's pay our bill and get out," suggested Gibbs suddenly, tossing his napkin on the table. "I've got to stop at the Club for my bags—my train leaves at eleven—you'll come up to the Grand Central and see me off?"

"I don't know why I should," Henderson disdained briefly; "you can get a porter to help you on the train."

"But I think you'll come nevertheless. There may be—"

He broke off abruptly.

"Oh, by the way, don't forget to remind me of something when we get to the Club."

With that they both rose, divided the amount of the bill, paid it, and calling a taxicab, chauffeured away up the Avenue.

Henderson did not speak during the first part of the drive. He kept seeing a face under a large hat, with wonderful gray eyes and a pretty, humorous mouth and an expression that kept changing with almost every word. The other one's appearance, except that she was in black, he did not remember so distinctly.

"They call themselves the 'Lady and the Dragon,'" broke in Mason Gibbs, supplementing his train of thought with alarming accuracy.

"Which?" asked his companion, giving a start.

"Both. But it's a joke, you know. The reason is—Hullo! here we are—wonder we weren't arrested! You're not going to sit here all night, are you? Get out! This 'shover's' begun to cook his oil—smells awful."

Leaving him to settle, Gibbs ran up the steps of the club. When Henderson found him he was surrounded by a group



"I hate these restaurants with mirrors, anyhow."

in the front room; they were all leaning forward listening.

"Here he is," whispered the center of the attraction, giving a glance over his shoulder. "Notice that distant, far away look in his eyes? Mark his *distract* manner? I say '*distract*'—no other word suits it—I tell you—"

"Hullo, old chap! Just talking about you."

He extended his hand, as if he had not seen Henderson all day. The greeting was entirely disregarded.

"See that?" continued Gibbs, still holding the picture and then lowering his hand in a friendly, forgiving fashion to Henderson's knee. "I was just telling these concerned friends of yours that you ought to take care of yourself. Why, just take in the electric-light bleach on that face—that broiled lobster expression—that champagne look under the eyes! My dear Johnnie, if

you'd only come with me for two weeks tramping and trout-fishing—"

"Tramping!" let loose the baited one from the depths of the big chair. "All the tramping you'll do will be in the stern of a boat on a cushion."

There was a burst of laughter; all eyes turned to Henderson. He grew animated under the encouragement.

"Aint it a shame?" he ran on. "A nimble, slender, athletic thing like that, condescending to pity us poor, weak, sluggish, overfed, fat—"

"Now, hold on, Johnnie, don't get personal," interrupted Gibbs pretending to take umbrage. "Don't call names:

Boys flying kites, haul in their white winged birds:
Ye can't "haul in"—when ye are fly-
in' words.

"Dr. Whitcomb Riley, Ph.D., or may be, James Russell Lowell, remarked

that once. I just mention it as a warning."

"Where are you going, Mr. Gibbs?" asked the new member, who did not know the others very well and thought matters had gone far enough. Mr. Gibbs thanked him with a glance; Mr. Henderson smiled, and the talk, led by the new member, who congratulated himself on his tact, degenerated into general conversation on fly-fishing and trout-brooks.

All at once Gibbs jumped to his feet. "Great Scott! I'll miss my train," he cried. "Johnnie, order a cab, will you? I've got to get my things out of the cloak-room."

In five minutes he had bidden good-bye to everyone, and he and Henderson were racing toward the station in a four-wheeler, the horse on a gallop.

"I suppose you'd like to know—good gracious, we almost ran over that old lady!"

Gibbs looked back through the little window and did not continue for a minute.

"You'd like to know—"

"Like to know what?"

Henderson's affected apathy hardly covered his irritation.

"Which one was the Dragon. Well, I'll tell you— But never mind—what's the odds?"

"Go on—I'd—"

"The one with the hat," concluded Gibbs, beaming on him. "But she isn't, you know, really. At least, if she is, Dragons are very nice."

"Of all the fat-headed imbeciles," commented Johnnie Henderson, "you are the limit! I hope to thunder you miss the train!"

"But if you had your red book, I might give you a name," tempted his friend.

"Well, test my memory; here's a chance."

Henderson fell into the trap unwarily.

"Her name is, 'Sweet—Alice, Ben Bolt.' But you'll have to get your work in pretty quick; she's—Oh goodness, goodness Agnes! What have I forgotten? Didn't I tell you to remind me of

something when we got to the club? What use *are* you! On my word! Will I have time to telephone when I *get* to the station? John Henderson, call me all the names you like—I *am* a fat-head!"

"Anything I can do for you?" asked Henderson, catching, what he thought for the moment, to be a note of real distress.

"Yes, you might—no, you can't, either— By the way, she's married, I forgot to tell you—Gracious, here's the station! Only three minutes! Help me through with my things like a good chap. I want to talk with you."

Carrying a leather case of fishing-rods and a big kit-bag, Henderson chased after him.

"My man," announced Gibbs to the ticket-taker at the grille, indicating Johnnie with a jerk of his hand as they passed through. With a sigh of relief, unfeigned by both, the bags and rod-case were delivered to the Pullman porter. Gibbs turned quickly, taking out a gold pencil at the end of his watch-chain. He began to talk very rapidly.

"Here now," he galloped on, "I've got to ask you to do something. I promised to send a man to help some friends of mine to pack up belongings," he began to shorthand his sentences. "In fact, forgot it—must be there to-morrow before ten—they leaving—good man, what's-his-name; ask-carpenter's h o p near-club-on-corner. Address is—"

"Beg yo' pahdon, sah," interrupted the porter, "got to close de vestibule, sah; train's 'bout to staht, sah."

"You hold it," said Gibbs; "this gentleman's the president of the road. Now—what-will-I-write-it-on? Here—"

He opened Henderson's overcoat and, before he could be stopped, scribbled something on the clean white shirt-front.

"That's address—send man there—Oh—er—said she's married—*was* married—now widow—Good-by, Johnnie."

He and the porter and the stepping-stool got on the moving platform together. Henderson apostrophized the departing train.

"I hope you never catch a fish in all your life—in all your life," he said.



"You can first take down those pictures"

He had taken hardly a dozen steps on his way to the street, when his expression changed from amused discomfiture to slow dawning discovery and then to overweening satisfaction. He tapped his chest self-applaudingly.

"'Merrivale,'" quoted he, "'you're a mind reader!'"

With that undeciphered, but telltale label on him, Mr. Henderson could not return to the club, so he headed for his diggings in the Loyalton.

When, late that night, clad in his sky blue silk pajamas he crossed the borderland twixt wake and slumber, he chuckled softly to himself; for, at this time, people of imagination are apt to think their wits are at their best.

The next morning at exactly ten o'clock Mr. Henderson was walking down an up-town cross-street, given to studios, stables, and apartment-houses. He was repeating a number under his breath like a votary telling beads, but he had repeated it so often that now he was not quite sure he had it right after all.

But here it was! A neat three-story brick dwelling with the unmistakable evidence of belonging to New York's artistic and semi-social Bohemia. He entered the vestibule and hesitated. So far he had been pursuing the brilliant plan that had come to him just before he went to sleep. But now the details grew misty—it was all easy the night before; he had worked it all out even to cues, speeches and "business." He had practiced several dialects in which he fancied himself proficient, for he was a member of the Comedy Club in good and constant rehearsal and, besides, belonged to another, where he met professional—and sometimes—real actors, too. But now with each passing minute he was growing more and more undecided. He was about to throw up the part, meditating a quick and ignominious retreat, when a card over a letter-box and under a push-button, caught his startled eye.

MRS. D. SKIPWORTH
MISS ALICE SWEET
STUDIO

A remembrance of something Mason Gibbs had said came to him instantly. With a hot flush of decision he pressed the button.

The jiggling, clackaty-clack of the electric-bell awoke other remembrances also, but he did not pause to dwell on them; he entered the dusky hallway and began slowly to climb the stairs.

Never before had the self-assured John Monterief Henderson suffered such a case of stage-fright. It extended even to his feet; they positively stammered. He was conscious of everything; his necktieless collar, his old hat, the once discarded coat, the soiled calico jumper he had borrowed from the Loyalton's engineer, that he wore underneath, and the way he had smooched his face with a bit of burnt cork. The "properties" he had gathered for the occasion—tied up in a newspaper, under his arm—seemed perfectly senseless adjuncts to an impossible situation. He felt like a person embarking on a charade before strangers, when far from the mood for such doings. He was on the point of backing down-stairs and out of the adventure entirely, when a musically cadenced voice addressed him from an open door on the first landing.

"Oh, good-morning. Did Mr. Gibbs send you here to help pack?"

Before he knew it—with presence of mind—or utter lack of it, for it sealed his fate, he responded:

"Yes'm."

"Then, come in! There's quite a lot to be done," the voice went on; "you'll have to get to work quickly."

This again reminded him of something that Mason Gibbs had said. He raised his eyes. His breath left him. His heart seemed to shrivel to the size of a last year's orange, and then change and expand to a six cylinder motor bereft of a muffler.

There she was, in a light blue embroidered kimono—he loved light blue!—the wide sleeve falling away from the loveliest rounded arm, her soft hair—evidently put up for the morning, but not for the day—straying a little round that charmingly pretty, piquantly intelligent face, with golden-green shadows



"Whad I rud away ver?"

on the chin and throat. But the voice! Oh that voice! He could imagine songs concealed in it—little musically silken whispers—ripples of laughter—

But he couldn't stand there imagining; she was talking to him!

"Did you bring any boxes?" she asked.

"No'm."

He wiped his perspiring forehead with the sleeve of his jumper after a fruitless lurch for his handkerchief.

"Perhaps I'd better—better be after—that is—er—I'll go back for them—thim."

There were glimmerings of generalship in this.

She did not appear to notice anything peculiar in his perturbation; maybe she was used to the upsetting influence of her

presence upon young men of all classes.

"No, never mind now," she smiled. "There's plenty to do before we'll need them. Come in!"

Johnnie Henderson faltered, floated, or swam through the door, he never knew which. The vision in light blue led the way down the narrow hall, passing several rooms and turning at last at the entrance to a large studio with a north skylight. A small dining-room was at side, half hid by *portières*, and on a table were silver things, a steaming coffee-pot, and a breakfast.

"You can first take down those pictures," said the presiding deity of the apartment, who in one swift moment had gained sway over poor Johnnie's heart also, "and brush them carefully. There's a step-ladder."

Luckily she had not looked at him. He was nervously pulling down from the sleeve of the soiled jumper the cuffs of his light blue shirt with their *lapis lazuli* sleeve-buttons. Instantly perceiving this to be a false move, he endeavored to push them back again; but a sudden diversion came to his rescue.

A neat little maid appeared at the door with her arms filled with fluffy things and asked a question about trunks. She used the word "*Mademoiselle*." Even in his confusion Johnnie made a note of that.

"You'd better wait, Marie, till Mrs. Skipworth comes back," said Miss Sweet.

Without any further orders to him she joined the maid, and after a little whispering in French, disappeared with her into one of the other rooms.

The amateur packer took off the aged coat and deposited his properties on the floor with a thump—he got that from his stage-training; actor artisans always do it. The newspaper burst open and displayed a heavy hammer, a screw-driver, a paper of nails, a ball of twine, and a large monkey-wrench—all borrowed, like the jumper, from Mr. Cassidy, the Loyalton's engineer. Why Mr. Henderson should have included the monkey-wrench was more than he could explain to himself just now—he certainly did not expect to pack the plumbing—but there it was. It looked so foolish that he decided to conceal it, and remembering that he had observed a steam-fitter wearing one as a side-arm—or better a back-arm—he hitched it into the little belt that acts as a compressor to the waistband of one's trousers.

This done, he ascended the wobbly ladder and turning, surveyed his surroundings before he touched a picture.

If Miss Alice Sweet was responsible for these canvases, she looked better than she painted—but that was all right!—Johnnie forgot his false position so entirely, that he almost sat down in empty space!—Many girls couldn't draw a straight line, or even sharpen a lead-pencil!—These were his thoughts; as to plans, his now soaring spirit was beyond them. He abandoned his fate to the goddess of fortune who so far had befriended him.

But the other goddess had not even looked in his direction! That hurt a little. He rubbed at his smooched face with the sleeve of the jumper which did not help very much.

Had not looked at him! That was all he knew of the matter! At that very moment Miss Alice Sweet was regarding him—at least as much of him as could be seen—from the breakfast-table, with interest, that changed to amazement and subsequently to consternation.

She had no idea that packers would wear such nice enameled boots—and mercy me! silk half-hose! light blue silk. She was astonished. Well, well, she had hardly glanced at him when he came in, but now—A hand, a very white, well kept hand holding a picture-frame, de-

scended into view—light blue, double backed cuffs and *lapis lazuli* sleeve-buttons!

She rose and tiptoed out into the hall just as Mr. Henderson's well-shod feet reached the floor.

He had not the least idea now that he was being observed from the crack of the studio-door. In fact, so far as any evidence of sight or hearing went, he was alone in the apartment.

He looked toward the dining-room. A cup of coffee, all poured out, stood there on the table, and some nice thin slices of bread and butter. It reminded him that in his haste to get his make-up and properties, and be there by ten o'clock, he had gone without his breakfast.

He cogitated.

"Oh, I wish he'd turn around," said Miss Sweet to herself. "He has a good figure, a little slender—but—oh!"

The packer had tiptoed into the breakfast-room and was bending over the table. He picked up the silver sugar-bowl!

Miss Sweet gave a gasp! From under the short checked jumper appeared what looked like a huge pistol! She was sure of it. Now she saw everything. A thief! She was alone with a thief!

Whatever Miss Sweet missed in art, she made up in decision. The maid was out, buying some large sheets of tissue paper. Her chum and companion, The Dragon, would not return until twelve. There was no one to send for help. If she should leave he might ransack the whole place. She knew what she'd do! And the first thing was to lock the front door, so he could not get away! Not only did she lock it, but she put the key—well, never mind—she hid it. From the dining-room she could hear the jingle of silver things. (It was Johnnie dropping a spoon). Oh, the number—the telephone-number? Aha! she remembered it! Mason Gibbs had told it to the Dragon and she had told her! "3100 Spring." The telephone was in the bedroom. She entered and closed the door. Then, in order further to muffle all sound, she covered her head with the eiderdown quilt.

The central asked if she was sure that was what she wanted. Yes—of course and quick—quick!

"Hullo! I know it is—I want an officer at once—No, no, of course not—This is:" (she gave her house-number and street). "No, I give you my word—Can't you tell I'm in earnest—There is a thief in this place now; he's taking the *silver*—I can see; I mean I can hear him. . . . Oh, please do, right away. He's armed—a big pistol—I'll keep him here—No, there's *never* any policeman on this street—Oh!"

There had come a crash that penetrated both the door and the eiderdown quilt. Johnnie had just dropped a shadow-box, containing a scrambled sunset, from the top of the ladder! Miss Sweet's voice took on redoubled speed and anxiety.

"Oh, hurry—hurry—He's breaking into things!—No, he doesn't know he's discovered—Sweet—Sweet. Oh, never mind—you have the number, second floor!"

Her face was pale when she hung up the instrument, but her eyes were bright with determination. The message had had the proper ring to the operator at police-headquarters and forthwith he began to stir things up.

Summoning all her courage, Miss Sweet went out into the hall. There was the man at the front door! He had his coat and hat on, a bundle wrapped with the calico jumper was under his arm, and he was fumbling with the latch.

"Oh, I beg pardon," he said, somewhat startled, "I fancied I was alone. I've taken down the pictures—and I think—er—I'll go for the boxes—This door—"

Heavens and Earth! He had forgotten all about dialect and other things. He had spoken in the proper person of John Moncrief Henderson! He fairly staggered.

"Oh, don't go," she smiled at him strangely, with a break in her voice. "I'm quite sure you've had no break-fast" (Mercy! Had she seen him helping himself?) "Have you—honestly?"

("Now isn't it the luckiest thing," thought Henderson to himself, "that I

made that break? I can go ahead and just be *me*—much easier.") He returned an answer aloud in tones of assurance.

"Thanks awfully. Tell the truth, I did not get anything to eat this morning; I was in such a hurry to get here."

He determined to tell just as much truth as was possible—because, again, it was easier.

One thing, however, gave him a constantly increasing shock: That Miss Alice Sweet could be so nice to a common, ordinary packer. Only—hold on! He was not "a common, ordinary packer"—anyone could see that at a glance—probably *she* had. His spirits revived again. Oh great! great! Suppose he could win her by his manly charms alone? He, the unknown, unnamed in the lists.

How lovely she was, with a shy, little frightened air about her now!

They passed through the studio. The pictures were all down on the floor; she had been some time at the telephone.

"I like this very much—er—copy of Rosa Bonheur—isn't it? Cattle—no, kittens—I see. For a minute I—"

"Yes," faltered his captor, interrupting, "I—I'm glad you like it. Now, perhaps—you'd like—I have some brandy, I got at the drug-store."

"No, thanks, ever so much; I never—that is, quite seldom, drink. But I will have a cup of coffee and another—a slice of that delicious bread before I go—maybe a little jam, too—very tempting in that silver jar."

They were at the table; his hostess glanced over it swiftly. Nothing seemed to be missing. Maybe, however, he had only taken the things from the drawer of the sideboard. She was afraid to look.

If there was one thing Johnnie Henderson prided himself on, it was putting people at their ease—overcoming their shyness, and how charmingly shy she was? So different from what she seemed to be at first.

"I'm rather new at this packing-game, Miss Sweet." She started. How glibly he spoke her name.

"Fact is, there are some things I can do better. I'm sorry I dropped—er—nothing but the glass broke.... No

thanks, I don't think I can eat all this."

She had been heaping his plate with bread, thickly spread with jam. A rather long and embarrassed silence followed. Johnnie felt he was losing headway.

"Will you be back to town this fall?" he asked in the casual, must-make-conversation manner of a social call.

"I—I'm not sure."

His hostess let her eyes rest on him for a moment. He did not have a bad face, although it was not very clean, and his voice was pleasant, even refined. Something in his expression reminded her of somebody she must have seen before, and to think! At this moment the apartment-bell trilled imperatively.

They rose together. Miss Sweet's face was flushed, her manner excited.

"Please sit down again. Don't—don't come with me. I'll answer it."

She hurried into the hall and flew to the door.

Mr. Henderson, left alone, caught a glimpse of himself in the Paul Revere coffee-pot. Immediately he began a hasty toilet with the aid of the finger bowl and a napkin, using the polished silver for a mirror. Then he fished a dark blue necktie out of his pocket and put it on quickly. The transformation was instantaneous, pleasing and effective. He smoothed back his hair.

A plan came to him. He would make a clean breast of everything—tell his name and see what would happen. But how had he circumvented the jealous and perfidious Mason Gibbs!

Miss Sweet brought forth the key and unlocked the door. She expected to see a uniform standing there, and she did. It was on the person of a diminutive telegraph messenger-boy, who was plainly suffering from the effects of chilly weather and adnoids.

"Misweed," he snuffled, extending a yellow envelope and a book.

"Wait here, don't run away!" entreated the lady addressed, breathlessly, as she nervously tore open the telegram.

"Whad I rud away ver?" returned the boy, snuffling again, with his mouth wide open.

It looked as if Miss Sweet had caught a bad cold, too—very suddenly. She bent forward in an effort to repress a spasm of choking.

"Oh, dear me!" she panted at last, "I am sure I shall die!"

Which painful truism, however, had in it no suggestion of parting or sorrow.

This is how the telegram, dated that morning, from the Adirondacks, read:

Henderson probably calling, treat kindly, make useful. Love to Dragon.
MASON GIBBS.

Miss Sweet controlled herself, at least, sufficiently to take the stub of a



A rather long silence followed

much bitten lead-pencil from the boy and attempt to write her name in the book. As she began, with the wrong end of it, very gingerly, she saw a large man coming up the stairs; another was waiting at the bottom.

"We're from the police-department," said the big man gruffly, without remov-

ing his hat. "Any trouble here, miss?"

"Not that I know of," returned the lady in blue, as if surprised and amused at the question.

"Any one in them other flats?"

"No, they're all empty."

"Stung again, Mike!" said the big man over the banisters to his companion.

With that they both went out on the sidewalk.

As soon as they were gone Miss Sweet turned, so her voice would carry into the dining-room.

"Oh, Mr. Henderson!" she hailed.

Johnnie, who had just concluded that the kittens in the picture were intended for King Charles spaniels, was startled out of a smiling reverie.

"Yes. Anything I can do for you?"

"Now you may run away," said Miss Sweet to the messenger-boy.

The Doll

BY BARRY PAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX

I

A WAX DOLL, please," said the woman, and the shopman, conjecturing from her appearance the amount she would spend, showed her something at two shillings.

Certainly Miss Mordaunt was not wealthy and did not look wealthy. Her dress was severely plain. She might have looked much prettier than she did, for she had fine eyes and beautiful dark hair. She would not cut her hair, but she packed it into the smallest possible compass, converting the glory of the woman into a neat, hard parcel. Her age was thirty-two, and she earned thirty shillings a week.

But the two-shilling doll did not please her.

"Not made to take off, I see," she said rather disdainfully.

"No, miss," the shopman admitted. "But we have a better article here with the removable clothing. Four-and-two this one. A nice thing."

Miss Mordaunt took it up tenderly. She made it shut and open its eyes. But it did not satisfy her.

"I think," she said, "the—er—the little girl would prefer a larger one."

Her hesitation in this speech was due

to the fact that she was unused to deceit. The doll was not intended for any little girl; there was no little girl in the question.

Finally, Miss Mordaunt—who made thirty shillings a week—bought an eight shilling doll.

"Practically a work of art," said the shopman as he folded soft paper about it and packed it in its box. "A very nice thing indeed, sure to give pleasure."

Really he seemed almost reluctant to part with it. He tried to turn the conversation to the toy gyroscope and the animated skeleton.

But Miss Mordaunt said gravely that she did not require anything further.

She departed with the doll in its box. The box had a neat little loop of string for her to hold it by, but she did not use the loop. She nursed the box in the fold of her arm.

There was much noise at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Motor-omnibuses banged and rattled, impatient to get on with their load of home-returning clerks. A cabman flicked a barking dog with the end of his whip, and the dog howled. Boys shouted: "Football Edition!" There was so much noise that what Miss Mordaunt said to the box on her arm was quite inaudible.



Miss Mordaunt talked to her during the banquet

She said: "Soon be home now, darling."

Yet Miss Mordaunt was not insane. Insane people cannot earn thirty shillings a week in the office of a Holborn cycle-manufacturer, as Miss Mordaunt did. She had gone there at eighteen shillings a week, and in four years she had made this considerable advance. Even now the manager considered that she was well worth her money. Mr. Fort, who kept the books, said that Miss Mordaunt was "a bit snappy," but he admired her. The old woman who cleaned out the office considered that she was "a nice-spoken lady." James, who took longer over an errand than any other boy in London, said that Miss Mordaunt was not his style, so far as looks were concerned, but that she was all right as long as you didn't start monkeying. Different people have different ideas about the same person, but there would have been an unanimous opinion that Miss Mordaunt was quite sane, and Harley Street would have endorsed that opinion.

Yet Miss Mordaunt, aged thirty-two, had just bought an eight-shilling doll for herself and for nobody else.

Why? She was a woman. Fate had made her a worker, the office was making

her a machine, and Edith Stafford was trying to make her a fighter. She was all alone and no man loved her. But she was a woman, and the very same thing made her buy that doll that has made other women perform the greatest acts of courage and self-sacrifice. If you like, you may call it the maternal instinct.

Even the purchase of a doll involved some self-sacrifice for this woman with thirty shillings a week. She lived in a tiny flat in a back street, and did everything for herself. The flat consisted of two small rooms and a box of a kitchen, and everything in it was intensely neat and orderly. The little flat had marked an advance; at eighteen shillings a week she had been discontented with a single room and much discomfort. But now—why, this was her home, and she had almost all that she wanted, but not quite all.

She lifted the doll out of its box, kissed it, patted its hair, smoothed its clothes, and made it sit down on a chair. She said, "You must wait just a few minutes, Cynthia. Be good."

She put the box on top of her wardrobe with the other card boxes that she had kept because they might be useful. She lit the gas-ring in the kitchen and put on the kettle. Then she

prepared her supper. There was tinned tongue in the cupboard, and that tongue had certainly formed part of her intentions. But if you have been buying eight shilling dolls, you can do very well on cocoa, bread, and apricot-jam—the last being used with great restraint. So the tin remained unopened. We all eat far too much anyhow. All this while Cynthia had waited patiently and had been good, as directed, but now she was brought up to the table and Miss Mordaunt talked to her a little during the banquet.

"Much nicer than that stuffy shop, isn't it, Cynthia? And what do you think I'm going to do after supper? I'm going to make you the very doviest little white silk nightgown you ever saw. You'll be quite a princess. And you shall have a little cot by the side of your mother's bed, and be ever so happy."

Miss Mordaunt did not always speak quite so prettily as this. If she were typing a letter at the office and the machine jibbed, she habitually said one brief bad word. It always made Mr. Fort laugh, and that laugh always made Miss Mordaunt very angry. She was never angry with the old woman who cleaned the office.

As she worked at the white silk night-dress she gave Cynthia information in a low voice. Miss Mordaunt confessed that so far she had been lonely. She had girl-friends, of course, plenty of them; but she always wanted a little girl of her own. She might have bought a dog, but who was to look after him while his mistress was away at work? Cynthia was better than six dogs.

Fortunately, Cynthia had permanently an expression of pleased attention, obliterated only when you laid her on her back and, by a simple mechanical contrivance, her eyes closed. Miss Mordaunt was explaining to Cynthia what a remarkably good time she was going to have, when a light ripple of piano-music broke in on the conversation, stopped, and then began again.

"Hear that?" said Miss Mordaunt. "I'll tell you what it means, Cynthia. It means that they've let the flat next door at last, and that the girl moved in to-day.

We shall have to come to some agreement with her about that piano. She seems to play very well, but there must be regular hours for it. I can't hold a meeting of the W. W. L. S. in my rooms with that noise going on. And as I've got to earn the bread-and-butter all day, I can't afford to be kept awake by a piano half the night. I'll tackle the good lady on the subject before I go to work to-morrow. And now, Cynthia, we'll see how you look in your new night-dress."

But for the moment this operation had to be deferred. There came a sharp rap at the outer door, and Cynthia and all that belonged to her were hurriedly deposited in the bedroom. Then Miss Mordaunt admitted Miss Edith Stafford.

Miss Stafford was tall, thin, jerky, and plain. Her eyes peered bitterly from behind a gold-rimmed *pince-nez*. She did not kiss Miss Mordaunt; she abhorred all unhygienic things, especially if they were at all natural. Cigarets were an exception.

"Evenin', Grace," said Miss Stafford. "Looked in to see why you weren't at the W. W. L. S. last night."

"I'd an awfully hard day. I didn't feel up to it."

"Nonsense," said Miss Stafford, taking a manly pose in the arm-chair and producing a leather cigaret-case.

The W. W. L. S. was the Working Woman's Literary Society. It consisted of seven members, and held fortnightly meetings. Had it consisted of more than seven, they could hardly have met in Miss Mordaunt's sitting-room when her turn came around; even as it was, two bedroom chairs had to be impressed for these occasions.

"Nonsense," repeated Miss Stafford. "Women are only tired because they think they are; it's one of the ways in which the ordinary woman makes herself ridiculous and keeps back the movement. Still you didn't miss much this time. Margaret Jackson lost her temper as usual. About Keats. By the way, she said something to me about you afterwards."

"Indeed? What was it?"

"That man Fort—do you mean to marry him?"

"Never. Of course not. Why?"

"Margaret Jackson heard through a friend of hers who knows Fort's young brother, that Fort said you had been much pleasanter in your manner of late."

"Then Mr. Fort will change his mind about that to-morrow."

"Good," said Edith Stafford, with a jerk of her cigaret-hand. "This is not time for women to marry. My word, if all the pretty girls thought as I do about that, women would be free within a year. I'm glad you're with me at any rate."

Grace Mordaunt blushed slightly. She thought that Mr. Fort was common, uneducated, and unprepossessing. But she also thought that she was very lonely. A further irruption of music spared her any discussion of matrimony.

"What a horrible row!" said Miss Stafford.

"Yes," said Grace. "It's the girl next door. I'm going to speak about it to-morrow."

"I should. One can hardly hear one's self talk. Well, I only looked in for two minutes."

She jerked her cigaret-end into the fire-place, reminded Miss Mordaunt that it was her turn to entertain the W. W. L. S. at their next meeting, and said a brief good-night.

When she had gone, Miss Mordaunt undressed Cynthia and tried on the white silk night-gown. Alterations were required in the neck, and were duly effected. Miss Mordaunt went to sleep that night with the doll in her arms.

II

After breakfast next morning Miss Mordaunt went to remonstrate with the girl next door about the piano. She meant to arrange it all in a friendly chat—to point out that there must be a certain amount of give-and-take in flats.

The plan was modified in its execution by the fact that there was no girl next door. The proprietor of the piano was a man—an enraged, fantastic, middle-aged male musician, who had a fine

flow of language but behaved much like a distraught and irritable baby.

His name was Malcolm Harverson, and he was a musician and composer, as he told her before she had got through the first two sentences of what she had to say.

He glared at her with large blue eyes. He ran his good white hands through his excessive crop of hair. He gesticulated.

"What am I to do? What on earth do you expect me to do? Do you know I've been turned out of more flats than any man in London! The other tenants always combine against me. At last I thought I was safe. There are no regulations whatever about piano-playing in these flats—not the shadow of a ghost of a regulation. I was pretty careful to find that out before I took this dog-kennel and on the second morning after my arrival I've hardly finished my breakfast—beastly eggs that I had to cook for myself because I can't find a servant—when a charmin' lady comes round to tell me to burn my Bechstein and go to the devil."

Miss Mordaunt resisted with some difficulty a tendency to smile at this elderly child.

"I don't think that's quite what I said, is it? You can play as much as you like until six in the evening, and some evenings you can play from six to ten, unless I ask you not to, but not after ten because—"

Mr. Malcolm Harverson clasped his head with both hands.

"Oh, wait a minute, please! How do you expect anybody to remember all that? I can't get up at six in the morning, and as for ten at night—why, there are lots of days when I don't really begin to live till ten at night. There ought to be a certain amount of give-and-take in flats—" Miss Mordaunt was slightly disconcerted by this phrase, which she had intended to use herself—"and nobody ever hears me complain. There's a woman in the flat over mine who has got a sewing-machine in C minor. Perfectly beastly. Yet I don't go running round, as you do, shouting to have her crucified."



"What do you expect me to do?"

Miss Mordaunt tried to explain that she neither ran nor shouted. She did not require him to burn his piano. She did not want him to be crucified. But as she had to rise early to get the work of her flat done before she went to the office at ten—

"That reminds me," said Mr. Harverson. The way in which he interrupted ladies was quite shameless. "I suppose you couldn't tell me of any old woman who'd come in and do the work of this flat for me. If she arrived somewhere about eight in the morning, and looked in again in the evening in the neighborhood of nine, that would—"

"Perhaps I might be able to find somebody," said Miss Mordaunt. "But that's not what I wanted to talk about."

She explained once more what it was that she wanted. He remained quite unsatisfactory. He would do his best, but he didn't like to make any promises because, so he said, he knew his limitations and he might forget. By the way, he hoped she would not forget to find

that servant for him, because really things were getting rather serious.

Miss Mordaunt had to hurry away in order to be punctual at her business. She had two minutes with Mrs. Fagg, the old woman who cleaned the office.

"Yes," said Mrs. Fagg. "I could do this Mr. Harverson if he suited me, and the work would fit in nicely. He's all right, miss, I suppose?"

"Yes, I think so. But he's like most men—not fit to take care of himself."

"Then I'll just call on him this morning, and judge for myself, saying as you sent me. Thank you in any case, miss."

Miss Mordaunt enjoyed the day's work which followed more than Mr. Fort did.

Mr. Fort was not in the least in love with Miss Mordaunt, but he had determined

that she would be just the right wife for him. She was good-looking. She was thoroughly sensible and practical, a little short in the temper—but Mr. Fort recognized that he had reached an age when a man must not be too particular, and that one may have to wait a long time for absolute perfection. Besides, once married, he thought that he could deal with that shortness of temper. Certainly, of late she had been distinctly more civil to him.

Therefore, Mr. Fort this morning adopted a manner towards Miss Mordaunt which was oleaginous and slightly intimate. What Miss Mordaunt said could have been telegraphed for sixpence, but it was enough, metaphorically speaking, to take the skin off Mr. Fort. He observed to a friend at luncheon that women were "queer cattle."

A stream of music greeted Miss Mordaunt that night as she came up the stairs. Mr. Malcolm Harverson was singing to his own accompaniment. He had a very fair baritone voice and it had

been well trained. Above all, he was an artist. Miss Mordaunt was in the mood for music, and was glad that Mr. Harverson had apparently forgotten her injunction. But the moment she closed the door, the music stopped abruptly. So Miss Mordaunt talked to Cynthia instead. Cynthia was sitting, curiously enough, just where Miss Mordaunt had left her in the morning—on the cushion of the one easy-chair—and she still wore the expression of pleased attention.

Miss Mordaunt said that Cynthia had behaved very nicely, and that she was pleased to see her again. Then she spoke about the music.

"It would have been more amiable, Cynthia, if he had just finished that song, and then left off. Men are always so stupidly literal, or perhaps he's turned sulky. I suppose you couldn't tell me if he's been playing much during the day."

She was correct. Cynthia could not.

Miss Mordaunt was opening that tinned tongue with her accustomed neatness, when she was called to the door. A man asked if she were Miss Mordaunt, and—assured on this point—delivered a florist's box into her hands. It contained white roses and the card of Mr. Malcolm Harverson.

On it, in a firm hand, was written:

With many thanks for
the much more useful
present you sent me
this morning—I refer
to Mrs. Fagg.

Since he put it like that, she felt that she might accept them. She loved flowers, but her expenditure upon them was of necessity limited. She placed the white roses on her supper-table, and invited Cynthia to admire them. Then she did devastating work on the tongue—one might almost have thought that tinned tongue did not cost money. But Miss Mordaunt was happy and hungry. Later in the evening she wrote a brief note of thanks to

Mr. Harverson, and she made a furtoque for Cynthia.

III

Days passed away, and every day Mr. Harverson's piano stopped when Miss Mordaunt returned from her work in the evening. It was silly of him to sulk in this way, and she made up her mind that she would tell him so. It was only on special evenings, which would be indicated to him, that she required silence from six till ten. On the other evenings it would be quite enough if the piano stopped at ten or thereabouts. The meeting of the W. W. L. S. in her rooms gave her an opportunity.

Miss Mordaunt possessed just six tea-cups; but the numbers of the W. W. L. S. had the Wordsworthian habit of being seven. She was preparing her room for the meeting, when she remembered the necessity for one more cup. She had meant to acquire it during the day and had forgotten it. It struck her now that she might borrow a tea-cup from Mr. Harverson, and she would at the same time explain to him that she did not hate music so much as he thought.

He showed no sign of sulkiness when he admitted her to his flat. He made her



"I suppose you couldn't tell me if he's been playing"

come into his sitting-room while he went to find a cup which was worthy of being used by a literary society. The sitting-room was principally occupied by a short grand piano and many books. It smelled pleasantly of Russia-leather and Turkish cigarettes.

As he came back with the tea-cup he asked plaintively if there would soon be an evening when he might play after six.

"You might have played any of these evenings. It was only on evenings when I specially asked for quiet that you were not to play."

He sat down suddenly and nearly broke the tea-cup.

"That's me," he said. "If I can get anything the wrong way round I always do. I thought it was only on evenings when I received a special permission that I was allowed to play. Of course I had to do what you wanted—after all your kindness in getting Mrs. Fagg for me—but I've been feeling very virtuous and conceited about it. Why, it's simply a case of the 10:05 over again."

"What was that?" asked Miss Mordaunt smiling.

"I had to go north to a rehearsal of some stuff of mine. I looked up a train, and fixed on the 10:05. That was all right. But then the thing that I have to use instead of a mind switched the figures round, and I decided that it was the 5:10 I had to catch. I got up very early, and had no time for any breakfast, and I caught the 5:10. At least I should have caught it if it had been there. There wasn't any 5:10, of course. The porter who told me laughed so, and my own cabman laughed so much, I wished I were dead."

Miss Mordaunt said she was-so sorry, but she seemed rather amused.

"I can't understand it. I cannot understand how anybody with the gift of music, like you, shouldn't be able to manage little practical things."

"Sometimes I doubt if music is a gift at all; I'm inclined to think it's a vice. Anyhow, it's just those little practical things which bowl me over. I believe I ought to advertise for an attendant: one of those men in black morning-coats and

felt hats that take the soft-headed old gentlemen out for walks at the health-resorts."

"Well," said Miss Mordaunt, "it's most awfully kind of you to have stopped playing on my account, and I'm almost ashamed now that I bothered you about it. Now I've got the literary society, and so I can't ask you to-night—"

"Of course not."

"But I hope you'll play to-morrow night just as much as you like—and—why there's somebody at my door. Good-night and thanks so much."

It was Miss Edith Stafford with a note-book containing the minutes of the W. W. L. S.

"I'm early," said Miss Stafford. "Though you might want a hand to get the room ready."

"Thanks awfully. Everything's all right now. I've just been borrowing a tea-cup."

"Ah!" said Miss Stafford. "The girl next door. I remember. Hope you've persuaded her to stop that tinkle-box of hers to-night."

"Yes, she went play to-night," said Miss Mordaunt, blushing.

It has already been observed that Miss Mordaunt had no natural tendency towards deceit.

The meeting was quite successful. Miss Tilbury read a thoughtful paper on some obscure passages in the work of Robert Browning, Miss Jackson animadverted severely upon it. Miss Edith Stafford pointed out that it was only men who wrote obscurely: the woman-writer was always lucid, at any rate. Miss Tomlin said that this reminded her of a story, which she told. It was quite a good story, about a lady who had prize Persian cats, and nobody knew, or cared, how Miss Tomlin came to be reminded of it. Then there was tea, and Miss Mordaunt drank from a blue cup that did not match the rest of the set. Miss Stafford asked her what the girl next door was like, and Miss Mordaunt, blushing, said that she did not know, and changed the subject rapidly.

Miss Mordaunt told Cynthia in bed that night that it had been quite a pleasant evening. She also acquitted Mr. Har-

version of sulkiness, and observed that he seemed to be rather well-off—had good furniture, and took cabs, and that sort of thing. To this Cynthia listened patiently but, from the accident of her position, with her eyes closed.

On the following evening Miss Mordaunt had just finished supper and was telling Cynthia about some further additions to her wardrobe, when the sound of Mr. Harverson's piano interrupted her. Miss Mordaunt listened with delight. At the end of the piece she clapped her hands gently by way of applause.

Then there came a knock at the door, and with some confusion she admitted Mr. Harverson. He stared round the room with his large blue eyes, and they took in Cynthia, whom Miss Mordaunt had forgotten to remove. But Mr. Harverson, who was not more confused than usual, said nothing whatever about the doll, though Cynthia was wearing the new fur toque and looked charming. He said that he had overheard the sound of applause, and that if Miss Mordaunt really liked the music she would hear it better on the other side of the wall.

Would not she come around with him?

Miss Mordaunt accepted, a little surprised at herself for accepting. She took the one easy chair in the room that smelled of Russia leather and cigarets, and Mr. Harverson demanded what he should play for her.

"If you've got a Beethoven handy, I'm fond of the 'Moonlight Sonata.'"

"Good old 'Moonlight,'" said Mr. Harverson irreverently. "All the school-girls have to go through it, just like the measles. But, however—"

And without troubling to find the music Mr. Harverson sat down and played the "Moonlight Sonata," and he did not play irreverently at all.

"I suppose it's old-fashioned," she said when he had finished, "but it's terribly lovely."

"Yes," said Harverson, "Beethoven's fine. Of course if he'd had the modern piano, there'd have been a difference. Still—yes, very fine. I say, Miss Mordaunt, I forgot to have any coffee after dinner to-night, and restaurant-coffee's rather rotten anyhow. I wish you'd help me to make some."



"This is not time for women to marry."



"The thing that bothers me is which part you put the coffee in"

"Wont it keep you awake?"

"No. If I don't have it, I can't sleep. I'm all wrongly constituted, and don't fit into the text-books."

So Miss Mordaunt helped him to make coffee, and afterwards helped him to drink it. She wondered the while what Miss Edith Stafford would have thought of it, if she had known. She could hardly understand herself how she came to be there, and to find it so natural. She felt it necessary to say that she had not intended her applause to be overheard.

"No," said Malcolm Harverson, "but these walls are very thin. I can even hear when you're talking to your little friend in the evening. I can't hear what's said, of course, or I'd have warned you, but I catch the murmur of the voice."

"What little friend?" asked Miss Mordaunt, perturbed.

"The doll, of course; you do talk to her, don't you."

"Y—yes," said Miss Mordaunt. "You see—"

"You needn't explain," said Harverson. "Bless you, I know. That sort of thing is easy to understand. If one didn't understand it, one couldn't make music properly. The kind of thing which really bothers me is the difference between the 5:10 and the 10:05, and which part of the percolator you put the coffee in, and what time the post goes, and how to do up a parcel, and numberless things of that sort."

Harverson and Miss Mordaunt met again the next night, and the next, and the next. It was on the third night that he told her she ought to let her hair down, and then she would be perfect.

Malcolm Harverson and Grace Mordaunt being what they were, the story could have but one ending—a happy ending. She was pleased that it was not until after she had accepted him, that

she read in the papers an account of the Festival, with lavish and unusual praise for a work by Malcolm Harverson.

Miss Edith Stafford said that she had known all along how it would be, and had seen it coming. This prescience seemed to be some slight consolation to her.

IV.

Some years later, when the newspapers had quite got into the habit of speaking of Malcolm Harverson as "the eminent composer," Mrs. Harverson decided to give her little daughter a doll. She confessed that it was not quite a new doll; in fact, it was one that she had formerly played with herself.

Miss Cynthia Harverson, who had not begun to worry about arithmetic, said that she supposed in that case it would be about a hundred years old.

"Getting on that way," said her mother. "But it's got the loveliest clothes that I made for it myself, and it shuts its eyes when it lies down, and it's got the same name as yourself."

"Let's see," said Miss Harverson.

The doll and its somewhat elaborate wardrobe were produced, and Miss Harverson was delighted with them. But she put one finger in her mouth and sucked it—the sure concomitant in her case of a mental process. Then she observed that her mother must have been no end of a child if she could make dolls' clothes like that.

"But I was much older than you are when I made those clothes, dear."

"How old were you?"

"I don't like to think about it—ever so much older than I am now."

They were still busy about the doll, when Grace heard her husband calling her.

"I say, my dear," he said, "I've got to send ten shillings to a man in Brussels. How does one do it?"

Grace crossed the passage to her husband's room.

"Give me the letter and the money, I'll do it for you. You haven't changed one little bit," she said, laughing.

Then she sat down, and added seriously:

"I've given Cynthia the doll, and she's quite in love with it."

A Fatal Move

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "The Red Mouse," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY F DE FORREST SCHOOK

I

J. PARKER WETHERILL, M. D. descended swiftly, ominously, to the floor below. He entered the cozy library and glanced silently for an appreciable space of time upon the man and the boy who paced the floor together.

"Colonel Mersereau," he said suddenly, cutting his words off short in a manner peculiar to himself, "I think you—and the boy—had better come up-stairs."

Mersereau groaned. Colonel Mersereau knew what it meant—that the physician this time was the messenger of doom. He strode rapidly on, the doctor and the boy bringing up the rear. The boy felt nothing; he merely wondered. An instant later they were in The Room.

The boy stood on one side of the bed, his father on the other. The boy, still wondering but not feeling, waited in bewilderment to see what would happen next.

The woman with the wan face opened her eyes, and her glance met her husband's. A stimulating glow lit up her eyes for an instant, then her glance passed, gropingly, from her husband's face. She was seeking the boy. To the boy it seemed as if his answering look were nothing but a stare, a glare, for still he was bewildered, still without feeling. Then, with closed eyes, for the first time, the woman spoke.

"Colonel," she whispered hoarsely to her husband, "*you'll* have to be a mother to him *now*."

That was all. J. Parker Wetherill stepped swiftly forward and beckoned to a nurse, and the boy saw that his father had slumped down on his knees, beside the bed. Still wondering, the boy noted that sobs were shaking his father's frame. Vaguely, the boy questioned his own right to be there. He had never seen anything like this; perhaps he ought not to see it now, even if Colonel Mersereau was his father, and She, his mother. He shivered with dread. But still he stared. And then his father spoke.

"Alice—Alice," murmured Colonel Mersereau.

He rose to his feet and pulled himself together. His glance caught the boy's.

"Yes, yes," he exclaimed quickly, as if he still were addressing a living presence, "I shall—I will be a mother to him now."

It was not until three weeks after the funeral that Billee Mersereau, the boy, began to feel. He was sixteen years of age. While she had lived, Billee Mersereau had regarded his mother with the good humored tolerance of youth. She had been necessary, perhaps. She had kept him in bounds. He liked her. But her maternal authority had weighed heavily upon him. Now that she was gone, now that the nervous excitement was over, he knew, somehow, that his loss was real and distinct.

He acknowledged to himself that he felt it not so much in its sentimental aspect as in its material deprivations. He didn't say these things; he really didn't think them; he merely felt that if his mother were still there, this would have passed off better; that would not

have happened; the other thing could have been arranged in some more advantageous way. Something told him that he would miss her more and more as time went on; that that undivided portion of the house that had belonged to her would be forever vacant, and that its vacancy would be forever present with himself.

But there was something that worried Billee Mersereau. When his father, gathering himself up from that bedside, had promised with strange emphasis upon almost every word—"I *shall* be a mother to him now"—Billee hadn't foreseen, hadn't understood the latent possibilities that lurked within the promise. If that resolution were a sacred, solemn undertaking upon the part of Colonel Mersereau, it was none the less a burden that bore heavily upon his son.

Colonel Mersereau was literally as good as his word. He was anything but feminine, was Colonel Mersereau—a fine, tall, slender, broad shouldered man, with the gray creeping into his hair; a man among men; a man of the people real, true, liberal, genuine. But now, for Billee's sake, in Billee's presence, he became a woman—a mother. Every move that Billee made became the subject of a joint caucus of the house. It was as if Colonel Mersereau communed with the memory of his departed spouse, and rendered his decision—always gentle, always kind, always fatherly—but horribly motherly, too.

"What would your mother say, Billee?" he would ask insistently. "What would she say, now?"

And Billee would groan.

And the Colonel would decide upon just the thing that a mother wouldn't say in a thousand years, and Billee would go forth from his presence and follow his own bent, as he always had done and always hoped to do.

"What the dickens will the old man do?" Billee would ask himself, plaintively, "when I begin to do real things—go into business, get married, and have children. Gee, I suppose he'll have to come around and help to pin the bib and tuckers on. Gee whiz!"

Billee went to Harvard. He went to

Harvard because his mother, were she living, would have sent him there. It cost money to do it, but the old man was game. Billee must follow her course, and no other.

The Colonel went up to Cambridge and picked out Billee's boarding-place, and looked up the eating-clubs and asked questions and made himself generally a nuisance, just as half a hundred other ladies were doing at the selfsame time, and then came back and shut himself up solemnly with Billee, in Billee's room.

"Billee," he said, "so far you've been straight. I've been at your side, keeping you so. But now—well, a college is a place for straight fellows. There are others there. There are many things done at a university there are not set down in the curriculum. Billee, boy," he cautioned sternly, "it's up to you."

Billee nearly crushed the old man's fingers in his grasp. He stretched wide his arms. It would be great to be free—free for four long years, to do as he liked in the way he liked best to do it.

"I won't dissipate, Colonel," he conceded, "I promise you that."

The Colonel sighed. He had known dissipated men, but he did not now remember having heard any of them say that he would dissipate; that was an intention usually disavowed.

"I hope not, Billee," was all he had to say.

He trembled as he said it. Then he took another step toward Billee and placed his hand upon the boy's arm.

"Athletics?" he queried, doubtfully.

Billee glanced at himself in the cheval-glass in the corner.

"Why not?" he asked, in turn.

The Colonel shook his head.

"Your mother wouldn't want your head broken, or your liver punctured, or your eyes put out," he said.

He kept on shaking his head.

"Very well," Billee replied, unctuously, "I'll stick to the curriculum, Colonel."

The Colonel gripped him by the hand.

"Billee," he said, "I want you to be good and decent, always."

The boy returned his father's glance with interest.

"I shall be good and decent always, Colonel," he replied, "I promise you."

"Four years," the Colonel murmured, as he left the boy alone, "four long, long years, for me."

II

It was during the four years that Colonel Mersereau was left alone that he took up, enthusiastically, the game of politics. He took it up because Peter V. Brinkerhoff had taken him up.

Peter V. Brinkerhoff one night had invaded the precincts of Colonel Mersereau's private cosy-corner in the green-room at the Iroquois Club, and had talked politics to the Colonel until the Colonel was, as he expressed it, deaf, dumb, and blind.

"You are wanted, Colonel," Peter V. Brinkerhoff had said, "because you're clean."

"And," protested the Colonel, "what am I wanted for, and by whom, and how and where, and when?"

"Leave that to me," returned Peter V.

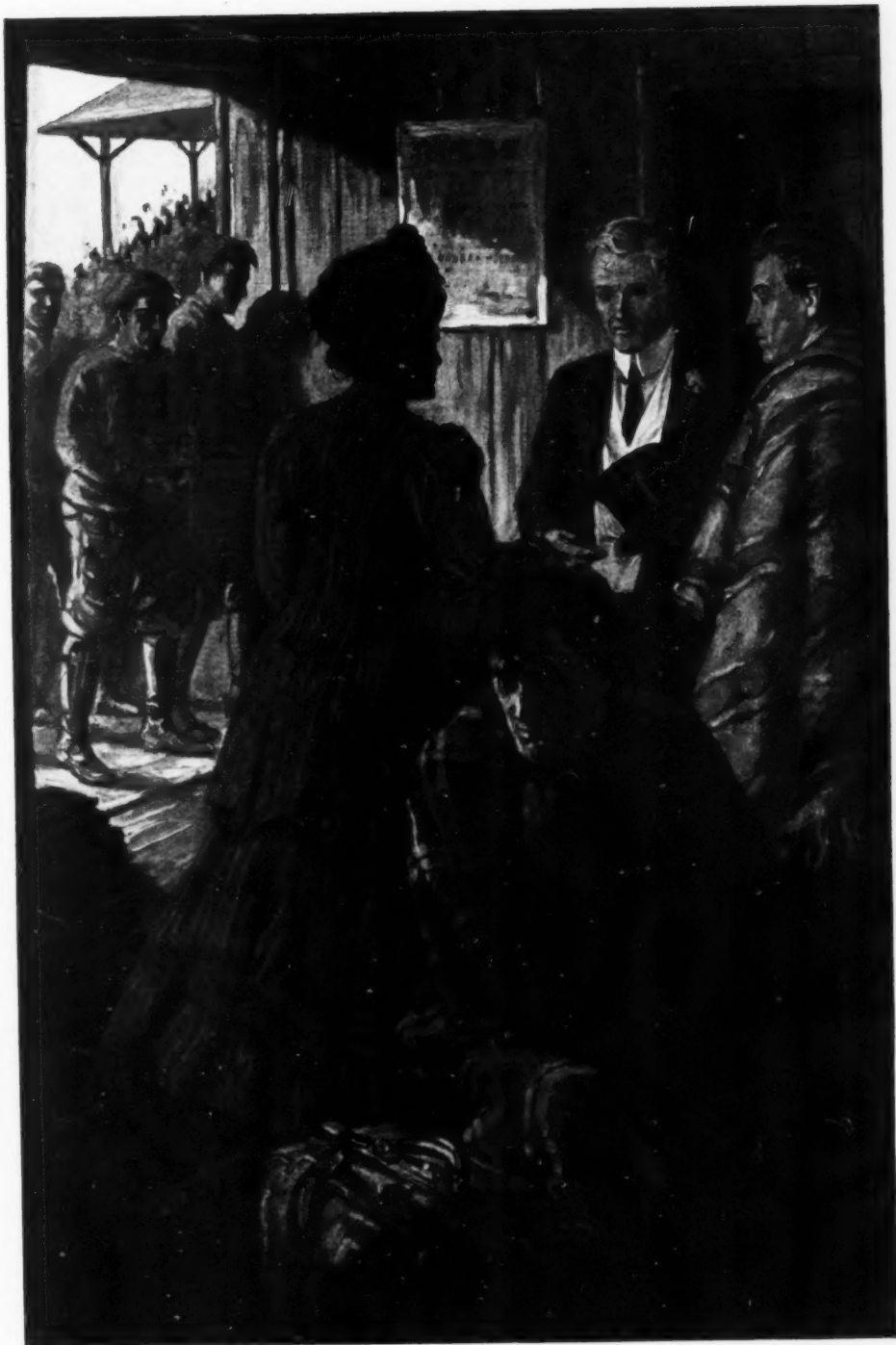
Colonel Mersereau had sniffed with some preliminary excitement. He was a man without fame; he had never had newspaper-notice of any kind. He had always transacted a neat, clean, high toned real-estate and stock-brokerage business in town, and had made a living, a good living. He had a slight military record of no particular moment. But there was nothing against him. His record was straight. When people thought of him at all, they thought of him as being honest as the day is long.

And Peter V. Brinkerhoff had suddenly stretched forth his arm and placed upon Colonel Mersereau's breast an unerring index-finger.

"Mulholland," Peter V. had said to his political henchman, the chairman of the county committee, "Mulholland, this man is the coming man."

"I dunno," Mulholland had replied. "A man can't be the coming man unless he needs money. I don't see as he needs any."

"He's ambitious," returned Brinkerhoff, himself a millionaire. "He has a



"By the way, Colonel, this is Miss Brinkerhoff"

son. He would lay down his life for his son."

"Yeh," suggested Mulholland, "but would he sell his soul—would Mersereau do that, even for his son?"

"Friend Mulholland," returned Brinkerhoff, "I never ask a man to sell his soul. I've never done it yet."

"Right you are," sniggered Mulholland, "you grab 'em without buyin'."

Mulholland was as important a factor in state politics as he ever had been in county circles. But Peter V. Brinkerhoff was more than that; he was the important factor in state politics. He was fast becoming a big factor in the nation. He was a multi-millionaire. There was one great secret to his great success, which success he had built up inside of ten short years. The foundation—yes, and the key-stone—of his wealth, was the People's Trust Company. In 1894 he had organized it. It was the first in its field. By 1896 it was an acknowledged success, a great financial institution. To Brinkerhoff it became a gold mine, for out of its funds he built the Red Line, and the Blue Line, and the Green Line street railways that criss-crossed and grid-ironed the city; out of its funds he had purchased his big interest in the Interstate & Tri-State Railroad; out of its funds he had created his big Domestic Life Insurance Company.

"Mul," he said to Mulholland, "it's the biggest proposition that ever was. Just so long as you can handle the \$25 that Jimmie Jones has saved out of his wages, and the \$24.99 that Maggie Murphy has put aside out of hers; just so long as you are allowed to pay 'em three per cent on their money, just so long you're goin' to be rich. I can make three hundred per cent on Jimmie Jones' \$25 and I pay him three. And look what I've done."

"Ah," Mulholland would reply, "it's great—until the smash."

The smash? Mulholland was not the first to think of the smash. Peter V. Brinkerhoff, the biggest man in the state, was the first man to think of smashes. From the very start he had considered every possibility, and another panic in his mind was the most obvious of these.

"It's not that I'm not solid," he often told his daughter, Genevieve; "it isn't that. But they mustn't touch my Trust Company. If they do—"

The People's Trust Company was the goose that laid the golden egg. Let the President whirl the big-stick about his head and bring it down upon the hollow backs of railroads or insurance companies—let him do it. Peter V. Brinkerhoff could stand it, because his railroads and his insurance-company were solid to the core. But when, one day, the crowds surged and swayed about the People's Trust Company in town; when New York, two hundred miles away, was smiting Trust Companies hip and thigh; when it became known that the People's Trust Company held for its assets the stock of the Red, Blue, and Green Lines, and the stock of the Domestic Life Insurance Company; when, in the final showdown, the people came to know that their savings not only might not be safe, but further, that those very savings had made Peter V. Brinkerhoff the very man he was; when the people howled and gnashed their teeth with rage, then Peter V. Brinkerhoff knew that he had been touched upon a vital spot, and he winced.

"Mulholland, boy," he said to the county chairman after the run was over, and the People's Trust Company had successfully withstood the shock, "Mul, this is going to mean something."

"Not a bit of it," returned Mulholland; "it'll all blow over. See if it don't."

"Not on your life," returned Brinkerhoff; "they know my stocks are good as gold; they know that the People's Trust is safe. But they'll never forgive me—for making my pile out of the crowd. See if they do. Watch out."

He was right. And Mulholland came to know that he was right. A storm was brewing that would take months and even years to break. But it was none the less a storm.

"What are you going to do about it, Peter V.?" queried Mulholland.

Brinkerhoff smiled.

"I'm going to make Colonel Mersereau governor of this state. That's what I'm going to do. Watch out."

III

Colonel Mersereau scanned the football-field. Then he nudged the man next to him.

"Can you tell me," he inquired, "who that chap is with the legs, who just ran around that end?"

His neighbor nodded.

"The man with his shirt torn half off his back?" he asked. "That's Mersereau."

"Is it?" queried the Colonel, gently. "That explains it. I've been looking for him everywhere on the grand-stand."

"On the grand-stand?" repeated his neighbor. "Billee Mersereau on the grand-stand, during a game?"

"He invited me to come down," faltered the Colonel, "and—I supposed he would be here. I really didn't know he had gone in for athletics."

"Everybody else knows it—in the universe," returned his neighbor.

And then, ignoring the Colonel, he rose and leaped into the air with a few thousand other people, and yelled himself hoarse.

"Mersereau! Bully Boy! Good work! Mersereau!"

Billee sought out his father after the game. The Colonel felt of him all over.

"Billee," he said, "I didn't understand that you had gone into athletics. Your mother—"

"You don't read the papers, Colonel," said his son, "but I do. And I don't know whether my mother would have approved of you; you've gone into politics. It's tit for tat, it seems. By the way," he added, turning, with just a bit of embarrassment to the girl who stood waiting at his side, "Colonel, this is Miss Brinkerhoff. Miss Brinkerhoff, my father, Colonel Mersereau."

The Colonel grinned and so did Genevieve Brinkerhoff.

"I guess," the Colonel said, "that I know Miss Brinkerhoff a bit better than you do, Billee Mersereau."

"I shouldn't wonder," replied the girl.

Billee shook his head. "Don't believe it, Colonel. Miss Brinkerhoff and I know each other pretty well. Don't we, sweetheart."

He smiled genially, and turned to his father.

"I call her 'sweetheart,' Colonel. It tickles her to death."

The girl laughed, too, with genial abandon. But Colonel Mersereau could see that underneath the surface, beneath the banter, there was something between Billee and the girl that was very real. He started suddenly as he realized it. For it seemed to him the finger of Fate. His son seemed, for the instant, to be linked with Brinkerhoff's daughter, just as he, Mersereau, was linked with Brinkerhoff. He didn't know that Brinkerhoff had done it, was doing it—that Brinkerhoff was their joint fate.

It was over the cigars that night, while Billee Mersereau and Genevieve Brinkerhoff were whispering in some cosy corner, that Brinkerhoff broke the news to Mersereau—the big news.

"Governor inside of twelve months?" gasped Mersereau. And then he added: "Why?"

"Because," said Brinkerhoff, "I like you. You're a conservative. You're not a socialist; you're not an anarchist. And you're clean."

"I'm clean, all right," admitted Mersereau, still sniffing with excitement.

"I like you, Colonel," went on Brinkerhoff. "By George, you're a friend of mine. I like you. I like your boy. I want him to marry my girl."

He stopped. Mersereau gasped.

"Yes," said Colonel Mersereau, slowly, earnestly, "I want him to marry your girl. If his mother were living, she would want him to marry your girl."

"And she'd want to see you Governor of your state, wouldn't she?" asked Brinkerhoff, solemnly.

"If she had but lived," sighed the Colonel.

Brinkerhoff put his big hand across the table.

"Colonel Mersereau," he said, "I'm going to be your friend. I'm going to make you Governor. I can do it. I'm going to do more. I'm going to make you United States Senator. Yes, I can do more. I can make you Vice-president of the United States."



"I came here to be seen by others and by you"

Mersereau paled. He glared at the man who sat across the table. He believed him. He felt the strength, the power, of the man who sat there facing him.

"Vice-president of the United States!" he whispered hoarsely.

"Ah!" exclaimed Brinkerhoff. He brought his clenched hand down upon the table violently. "And even then Peter V. Brinkerhoff won't be through. Some day—who knows—some day, possibly—The Big Job."

"President!" gasped Mersereau.

"Ah," returned Brinkerhoff, "the Big Job—for you. We'll try it, anyway, my boy. We'll try it on."

IV

There was only one thing that Mulholland, the chairman of the State Committee, didn't like about Governor Mersereau, and he told Brinkerhoff of it.

"What in thunder did he make his son his private secretary for?" he asked petulantly.

"Well," said Brinkerhoff slowly, "I don't see why he shouldn't. He wants to keep the salary in the family. Anyway, three thousand a year is money, isn't it. The Governor isn't a millionaire. And I can't give him money, can I? You don't seem to understand that we've got a straight man in the chair."

"So straight he'll fall over backwards," growled Mulholland, "but I don't like that son-business. There's too much sentiment between 'em. I've watched 'em. A private secretary—why, say, if a private secretary turns ugly or peaches, all a man has got to do is to say he's a blamed rascal. But this man has his son, and if there's any monkey-business, the son has got to know it. And what'll happen then?"

"There won't be any monkey-business," Brinkerhoff assured him.

"I tell you," went on Mulholland, "knowing all the parties, I say that puttin' the boy in as private secretary, salary or no salary, was a blamed bad mistake. It's a fatal move. That's what I say."

Governor Mersereau was the people's choice—at least the people so believed. He started in to do carefully, conservatively and earnestly, the things that the people wanted done. But—it was three months after he had taken his oath of office before he clearly understood why Brinkerhoff had made him Governor.

"You've got to veto the Trust Companies Investment bill."

That was the thing that Brinkerhoff had said to the Governor. And the Governor knew that he was Governor for one purpose only—and that was the purpose.

"You see, Governor," Brinkerhoff had explained, "it's a bad bill, anyhow. It cuts the People's Trust Company—"

"All trust companies—" the Governor had interposed.

"Oh, well," said Brinkerhoff, "it's aimed at my trust company. It cuts my trust company out of investments in stock, in land enterprises, railroads, insurance—everything. All that we can do is to take first mortgages—first mortgages, think of it. A bare five per cent. And railroad-bonds. Why, Governor, I've built my town, your town, our hometown, out of the People's Trust Company. If I can't use that money, what's going to become of us?"

"And what's going to become of you?" returned the Governor, his face unnaturally pale.

Brinkerhoff nodded without looking at him, and went on rapidly.

"You've hit the nail on the head, boy," he said. "What's going to become of me? It'll take a million a year—millions a year out of my pocket. It'll ruin me. I've got to run railroads. I've got to run my insurance company. I've got to use the People's Trust Company."

"And the people's funds," said the Governor.

"Exactly," went on the other. "And hang it, here's the crisis. I've seen it coming. I knew it would come. The legislature is against me. You know that. Public opinion did it. Public opinion beat me out this time. Next time, hang it, I can pick my legislature. But this time I've got only you, my friend—"

"If I veto this Trust Companies Investment bill," said the Governor suddenly, for he thought he saw a loophole for escape, "they will pass it over my veto."

"Not on your life," returned Brinkerhoff. "Do you think I haven't got this doped out, my boy? There's one thing I can do. I can bedevil it along until the end of the session. I can hold it up until the day before the legislature adjourns. Then it will be passed. Then it will come to you."

"And I—"

"You will veto it."

"There will be an extra session to pass it over my veto."

"No, I have got that doped out, too."

"The next legislature will pass it over my veto."

"No. The next legislature will be mine. I tell you, Governor, it's up to you. You are the man of the hour. That's why I put you here."

Governor Mersereau did not sleep that night. He was well assured of three things. First that the Trust Companies Investment bill was everlastingly right, and that it should be signed instead of vetoed. Against that, overweighing it, was the patient purpose of the giant Brinkerhoff, who had placed him, Mersereau, the pigmy, there, to do this single act; whose plans had involved years of foresight, of manipulation. Third, the Governor knew that he and the boy, and the destinies of the two were irrevocably linked with the fortunes of the Brinker-

hoffs. Over all was a strange glamor that subdued resistance. The devil-fish sends forth a spume that overpowers its victim. Brinkerhoff was a man of his word. And Brinkerhoff had said: "United States Senator—Vice-president—and after that, a try for—The Big Job."

As the Governor shaved next morning, he looked himself squarely in the face.

"I'll veto the Trust Companies Investment Bill," he told himself.

V

Governor Mersereau had seen his son Billee on the football-field, disheveled, with his shirt torn half off his back. But Governor Mersereau had never seen his private secretary Billee Mersereau, with a black eye and a bloody nose until now. It was the afternoon of the day the legislature had adjourned. The Trust Companies Investment Bill had passed both houses. The Governor was sitting calmly at his desk, smoking a big black cigar, and facing fate. Into his presence tottered a living wreck. The wreck was Billee.

"Only the other fellow got it worse," said Billee.

The Governor was alarmed.

"Billee," he cried, "you're not drunk. What would your mother say?"

"Drunk," echoed Billee, "not on your life. And my mother would pat me on the back. Gee, we had it hot and heavy."

"Who," queried the Governor, "is 'we?'"

Billee, private secretary, was at the wash-stand, wiping off the blood.

"Ellenbogen and myself," he answered.

"Ellenbogen," gasped the Governor, "the President of the Senate?"

"Ah," returned Billee, "he got it good and proper, too. He slandered you, and I walked into him. What's a private secretary for if not for that?"

"He slandered me?"

The Governor grew white, and cold.

"Sure," said Billee, walking toward his father with a bloody towel in his hand. "He said that you and Peter V.

Brinkerhoff were in a deal to veto the Trust Company bill. That it was cut and dried. He said you were *bought*. That's all. I hit him first—and—last."

"Did—anybody see this, or hear about it?" queried the Governor.

Billee nodded carelessly.

"Only Jimmy Olds of the *Morning Mail*. It'll be in all the papers in the morning. Not only the fight. I gave Billy Olds a rattling interview, a hot one. I told him straight from the shoulder that the Governor of this State was going to sign that bill."

The Governor gasped.

"You told him that?" he echoed.

"Yes," said Billee calmly. "Of course you're going to sign it. Aren't you? I never heard you say you weren't. There's only one side to a bill like that."

The Governor rose in his chair. He was livid.

"You—you idiot," he screamed, "*I'm going to veto it!*"

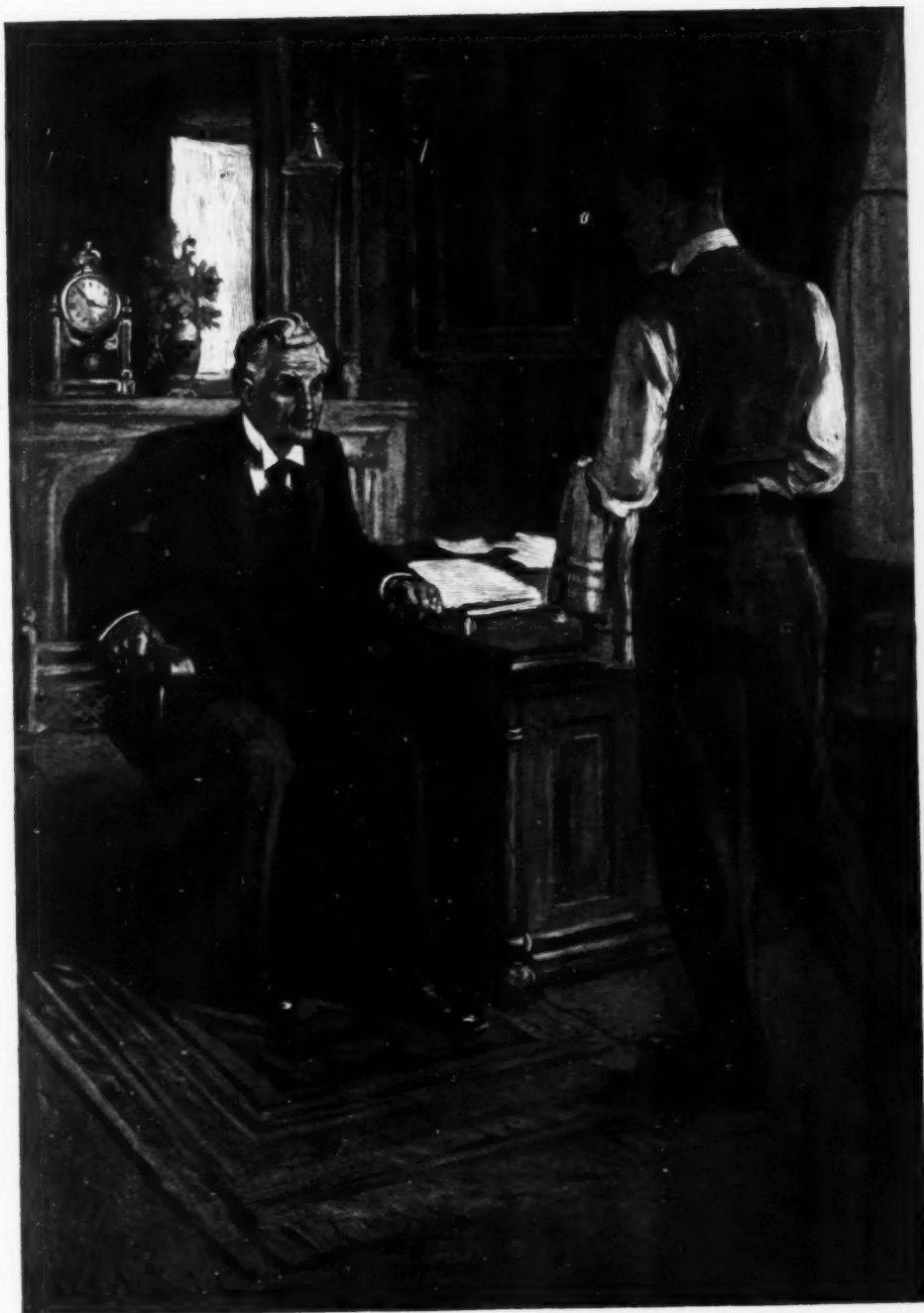
Billee Mersereau turned pale in turn.

"*Veto it!*" he exclaimed. "Veto it? No." He paused. Then he added: "Why?"

The Governor sank into his chair. He held his gaze upon his son, but he did not see him. His view was of another scene—a death-bed scene. Down through the years a woman's voice was still ringing in his ears:

"*You'll have to be a mother to him now.*"

There were three courses open to the Governor. He could withhold his confidence from his son, and refuse to tell him; this involved deceit. He could openly lie to him; this involved deceit. The third course was the only rational course to pursue. The boy was his private secretary; through all his future political career the boy and he would go together hand in hand. The boy was his. *He could corrupt him here and now.* He could show him the necessity of climbing by subterfuge, by crookedness; he could lead him into that path. The boy would follow, after the first shock. For had not *he*, Mersereau, acquiesced, after a brief struggle? And why not? He could make the boy, too, a great statesman. Three courses open. And only one safe



"He said you were in a deal to veto the Trust Companies bill"

course to follow—for the bill must be vetoed. And that meant that Billee must be told—must be corrupted.

Out of the ether a phrase patched itself together and smote the soul of Governor Mersereau:

"You'll have to be a mother to him, now."

But the Governor deafened himself, and told the boy.

Billee listened throughout the recital, with wide-open eyes and parted lips.

"Father—Colonel—Governor," he cried at length, "and you mean to say you're going to veto that bill—because of *that*!"

The Governor nodded, this time sternly.

"I am the judge of these things, boy," he said; "you're my private secretary."

"I don't care what I am," declared Billee. "I'm going to—oh, I won't expose you, but I'll give up Brinkerhoff's game. I'll let you down easy, but I'm going to see that this bill is passed—passed. Father—don't do this thing. Don't!"

The Governor smiled a hard smile.

"What about Genevieve Brinkerhoff?" he said.

Billee Mersereau winced. But he was game.

"That settles it," he announced. "Now I've got to show up Brinkerhoff."

He had started out, when the Governor called him back.

"Billee," he said, gently, "you've won."

He held up his hand.

"Don't make any mistake, boy," he warned. "It isn't fear. It isn't exposure that I'm afraid of. Brinkerhoff and I can ride through scandal like the wind. You know that. We've got power. We're superior to the *Morning Mail*. It isn't fear. It's your mother, boy. It's *you*. I've been a mother to you all your life. I'll be a father now."

The Governor's private secretary stepped into his own room and returned in an instant with a document. He laid it silently upon his father's desk. Then he left the room.

Two minutes after the door closed behind his son, Governor Mersereau scratched his name upon the paper. It

was the Trust Companies Investment bill.

VI

Billee Mersereau went to Mrs. Pallet-Searing's ball that night. He created a sensation. But he stalked on, nodding right and left until he found Genevieve Brinkerhoff.

"Billee," she shrieked, "you're a fright."

"Come into the cosy-corner," he suggested.

Once there, he turned to her.

"You will take notice, Genevieve," he said, "that I am not drunk. You saw me last night? My eyes were all right then?"

She flushed. "I should think so," she replied.

Billee's eyes were capable of making as much havoc as they now had suffered.

"*The Morning Mail*," said Billee, "will contain an account of some disreputable brawl in which I have engaged to-night—in some disreputable hole in the wall in town. That's why I came here. To be seen by others and by you."

"Why will it contain that?" she asked.

"Because," he answered, "your father will put it in."

"Why?" she persisted.

"*The Morning Mail*," he went on, "will also contain a correct account of my encounter late this afternoon with Karl Ellenbogen, the President of the Senate, whose eyes, I am happy to say, are a much deeper shade than mine. But you must know and understand that I've been decent and not disreputable."

"Billee," she exclaimed, "tell me all about it!"

He told her the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He spared no one.

She nodded when he had finished.

"That's father all over," she said, "and you're in for it, you and the Governor. He'll never let you rest—never."

She mused for an instant.

"Billee," she went on, "how much salary do you get?"

"Three thousand," he responded promptly.

She seized him by the arm.

"Come with me," she exclaimed. "You don't know father. We haven't an instant to lose. Come—come!"

She secured her wraps; she called her big machine.

"87 North Avenue," she said briefly to the chauffeur.

It is seen that Genevieve Brinkerhoff was, in many respects, like unto her father. When Peter V. wanted a thing, he did not permit any grass to grow under his feet during an attempt to secure the coveted end.

But what his daughter had to say to Billee Mersereau on this night of nights, as, in accordance with her instructions the chauffeur gave the car the third speed, must remain untold.

If the chauffeur overheard, he gave no sign. Chauffeurs are not employed to give signs of overhearing.

Suffice it, that what she *did* say met with an eager response on the part of the young man beside her, the young man whose hand, under the lap-robe, held tight to hers—so tight, indeed, that as he increased the pressure once in response to some word of hers, she winced.

At 87 North Avenue they alighted and tripped lightly up the steps.

"Are you sure this is the right place?" Billee asked.

"Quite sure," she replied.

He lit a match and held it close to the front door. Upon a brass plate appeared the words:

REV. JAMES PETERSON.

"This is the right place," he said, and rang the bell.

Next morning the *Mail* was full of news. It contained first, an account of the fracas between Ellenbogen and the

private secretary of the Governor which had the ring of truth. It contained, further, a denial of the fight, which had the flavor of a lie. It contained, still further, a story of a midnight brawl in a den of vice, in which Private Secretary Billee Mersereau was alleged to be the chief marauder. This article was known to be untrue to every individual who had attended the Pallet-Searing ball. It contained, above all, the record of the passage and the signing of the Trust Companies Investment bill. Even that wasn't all. On the fifth page appeared this insignificant item, paid for at so much per word:

MARRIED—By the Rev. James Peterson, at the parsonage, No. 87 North Avenue, on the 21st inst, GENEVIEVE BRINKERHOFF, daughter of Peter V. Brinkerhoff, to WILLIAM MERSEREAU, ESQUIRE.

Genevieve Brinkerhoff Mersereau and her husband disappeared from sight for the next two weeks, during which period Peter V. Brinkerhoff hurled anathema upon anathema upon the gray head of the Governor. But at the end of the fortnight Private Secretary Mersereau burst into the gubernatorial sanctum one day in an exuberance of glee.

"Governor," he declared—and the eyes of his father glowed as he felt that he had a fighter at his side once more—"Governor, the boys are going to put me up for the Assembly next fall—and you don't know what the passing of that bill has done for you? You're going to be United States Senator?"

"No!" gasped the Governor. "But—Brinkerhoff?"

"Do you suppose," resumed his son loftily, "that Peter V. Brinkerhoff is any match for you, and me and—Genevieve?"



Through the maze Rosalie was borne in the wagon without horses

Rainbow Gold

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Author of "The Alembic," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY RALEIGH

THE rain did not stop until late in the afternoon. Then the day turned fine and cool, and Rosalie opened the window to give her mother air. The rain had washed the acrid summer dust from the trees in the park, and at last the leaves looked green, and the grass was fresh. The sun came out and the wet leaves sparkled. The fountain seemed to be singing a little song. The sparrows were chirping twice as briskly as on the hot days. An organ-grinder played on the corner and the children danced on the pavement. Rosalie begged to be allowed to go into the park for a little while, and her mother let her go.

It was just as she entered the park

that Rosalie saw the rainbow. The sun was sinking. She could see it, big and red, and round, at the end of a long street that ran through one of the rivers, and the rainbow was in the sky in the other direction and it seemed very near.

As she stood with her head tilted backwards she heard someone say:

"Little girl, do you know what you are looking at?"

She turned and saw an old man with a long white beard and a stick in his hand, who made her think at once of Brother January, in the story of the Four Seasons, and also of Santa Claus, his eyes twinkled so merrily and his beard was so white; but she could see

that his clothes needed brushing and mending.

"Yes, I know," she answered; "it's a rainbow."

"So it is," said the little old man; "and do you know what you could find if you went to the end of the rainbow, over yonder where it touches the ground—or it does, you could see, if the houses were not in the way—do you know what you could find?"

"No," said Rosalie, shaking her head.

"Well, well, well!" said the little old man, laughing in his beard. "Just to think you don't know that! Why, there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, a pot brimming over with gold! I thought all little girls knew that."

"It seems to me that if they did they would go and get the gold," said Rosalie.

"They do go, and there is a pot of gold for each one who gets to the rainbow's end," replied the little old man. "Well, well, I must move on. Good-evening, little friend, I am glad to have seen you."

"Good-night, sir," returned Rosalie, politely; and after the little old man had turned away she stood quite still looking after him. Then she glanced backward, up at the window of her house—that strange house the city people called a tenement, where so many other families lived. She could not see her mother. Then she looked at the rainbow again. The end that went down among the houses did not seem very far away. In fact, it seemed quite near.

So she went away from the park to find the end of the rainbow and the pot of gold! It was needed by her family.

Rosalie felt sure she would be able to reach the end of the rainbow before it grew dark, and even if she lost her way she knew she could get home again safely. Her father—new from the country, and a hater of the city—had written her name and address on a card, and had hung the card on a string around her neck.

Rosalie was rather tall for her age, and walked along as if quite certain where she was going; and as there are thousands of street-loose children in this part of the city, nobody paid any attention to her.

She kept the rainbow in sight for quite some time, but finally it grew dimmer and dimmer and the sky darker and darker, and the electric-lights began to appear in the streets. And the rainbow just melted away, like the Cheshire cat in the story-book, until at last it was gone! Rosalie hurried on down a long street at the end of which there was another small park. She hoped to see the rainbow again when she got into this open space. But there was not a sign of the rainbow to be seen when at last she reached the park.

However, she had noticed exactly where the end of the rainbow had come down and she made up her mind to go to that place, anyway.

This was the first time that Rosalie had been out in the city streets, and she felt that if she were not thinking so hard about the pot of gold she would be stopping every few steps or so to look at all the strange and wonderful and sometimes alarming things around her. Big wagons without any horses, rushing through the streets with bells ringing and horns blowing. Long trains roaring and rumbling high in the air on bridges that ran through the streets as far as she could see! And such crowds and crowds and crowds of people everywhere! And what a noise they all made! Sometimes she nearly forgot all about what she was doing, about the place where the rainbow end had come down and about the pot of gold, and felt that all she could do would be to go on with the crowd, on and on, and on; she did not know where, she did not know why.

She grew very, very tired, did Rosalie, and felt that she would like to go to sleep, or to cry. She wished her mother was with her; but how glad her mother would be, and her father, too, she would cheer herself by thinking, when she returned with the pot of gold!

If only her feet had not hurt her so, she would not have minded how tired she was; but they did pain her sorely, and I feel sure that she would have given up the search at this point and sat down on a door-step, if it had not happened that again she saw the rainbow. She saw it as she turned the corner of a broad street and came into a wide,

open place. The buildings were ablaze with electric-lights of many colors. The wagons without horses were rushing everywhere. It is true that the rainbow was not just like the one she had seen softly arching the misty blue sky above the rain freshened grass and the wet green trees of the park, but it was really a rainbow, just the same; and if Rosalie had been able to read she would have seen that the words, "The Rainbow," were on the building, formed of electric lights, just underneath the rainbow made up of other, softer, many colored lights that were arched across the wide front of the structure.

Rosalie ran eagerly across the open place. One of the swift noiseless wagons without horses nearly knocked her down, and the man who was driving cried out at her angrily, but Rosalie did not hear him. She hastened to the door of the building and scurried up several broad stone steps. Two tall black men in red coats, and orange vests and blue pantaloons, were standing on either side of the doorway, and Rosalie knew that they were Ethiopians, such as were in the Arabian Nights. They were so tall, and their heads were so high in the air, that they did not see the little girl until she had slipped by them and had entered the building.

She ran on along a broad hallway and entered a great room blazing with colored lights and filled with round tables glittering with linen, and dishes and silver and flowers, at which many people were seated eating, drinking, laughing, and talking noisily. At one end of the room, behind green palms, a band was playing. Whirling brass wheels buzzed in yellow blurs continually, making rushing winds that caused the flowers on the tables to flutter and blew Rosalie's hair about her face as she passed before them. Her eyes were dazzled by all this light and medley of brilliant colors, and her head was confused by the noise and the music, and soon after she entered the room she came to a standstill, quite bewildered.

A fat little man with a very black suit of clothes and glaring white shirt-front, pushed his way toward her through a number of other men who had

white aprons tied around their waists. Rosalie had never seen men wearing aprons before, and she thought even then that they looked funny. She felt sure that the fat little man was coming to get her and she shrank back, really frightened for the first time that night.

But just then two soft, bare, white arms were thrown around her, and she was drawn to the side of a most beautiful young lady, even more beautiful than Rosalie's mother, and with much pinker cheeks and brighter eyes. The pink was all over this lady's face, not just upon the top of her cheeks, as on Rosalie's mother's face. And the strange young lady's dress was ever so much brighter and lovelier than any Rosalie had seen before.

"Why, kid, what are you doing here!" said the strange young lady.

Before Rosalie answered she glanced shyly around her. She saw that another young lady was also bending toward her across the table, as were two men in black clothes and white shirt-bosoms; one man had a fat red face; the other, whom she liked better, bent so far forward that the top of his head, all bald, glistened in the light. Both men had glasses in their hands filled with something that bubbled. But although Rosalie saw all this, she looked only at the beautiful young lady that held her.

"I am looking for the rainbow," said Rosalie.

"Well, kid, this is The Rainbow, sure enough," said the young lady. "What do you want here? Where under the sun do you come from? Are you a little country girl—your cheeks are too brown for a city kid."

"I am looking for the pot of gold," said Rosalie. "Yes, I am from the country; I am going back there after I get the pot of gold."

"A pot of gold!" cried the fat red-faced man. "Well, wouldn't that jar you!"

And he began to laugh noisily.

"Now, you put brakes on that laugh of yours, Paddy," cried the pink-faced young lady. "You fade away, and let me do the talking—"

"The little girl is lost, I think—shall I call a policeman and send her home?"



"Why, there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow"

asked the fat man who pushed his way through the men wearing aprons.

"I'll call you when I'm good and ready—beat it! Skiddoo! before I get mad!" said the young lady with an angry toss of her yellow head.

And the little fat man bowed humbly before her and backed softly away rubbing the palms of his hands together.

Then the young lady pushed back her chair and lifted Rosalie to her lap.

"Oh, cut it out, and don't be foolish," said the other young lady; "dinner's gettin' cold an' how's Paddy and Fred goin' to spend all the coin they picked up at the track if you waste good time this way—"

But the pink-cheeked young lady paid no attention to the other, and she asked, still hugging Rosalie: "What's your name, kid?" "Rosalie."

The yellow-haired girl jumped in her seat. The man named Fred bent further over the table. The red-faced man broke into another hoarse laugh, saying:

"Wise kid, this one; she knows her little game! But I wonder how she got next to your name, Rosalie?"

The yellow haired girl bent still closer over Rosalie, who was fingering her dress and who now said:

"That's a lovely dress, but you ought to see my rosen-musling dress, and my pink stockings, and my patent leather pumps."

"Your roser-musling dress, what is that?"

"Why, my rosen-musling dress, my mama made before she got sick and

never got it finished; but she will when we go home and she gets better."

"I guess the kid means a rose muslin dress, Rosalie," said the second young lady, in an interested way, adding: "Is your mother sick now, kid?"

"Tell me all about it, Rosalie," whispered the first young lady. "I used to live in the country myself, and I used to have a rose muslin dress."

And then, while the people at neighboring tables stared curiously—people babbling of the races of the day and of the shows of the night—and while the band played and the dishes and glasses clattered and the throbbing, heated air of the place was churned by the whirling electric fans, and the waiters moved softly among the throng, little Rosalie told

big Rosalie (not a very big Rosalie, and not much more than thrice the years of the little one she held on her knees) all about her father (out of work) and her mother (who was sick) and the park, and the old man with the white beard, and the rainbow, and the search for the pot of gold.

And even the fat, red-faced man, the bookmaker, Paddy Driscoll, did not laugh nor interrupt again.

"Where is the card your father gave you?" someone asked at the story's end.

Rosalie pulled it out; it was warm from her chubby breast.

"Now, see here, Paddy, and you, Fred!" cried big Rosalie suddenly. "You got to get in on my play now—or I'll never sit in any game with you again. Here!"



Rosalie

At this point she reached down and fumbled under the hem of her dress and then threw a bundle of bank-bills on the table.

"Take this, and beat it to the All Night Bank and get some gold for it!"

"I'm on!" declared the fat man draining his glass.

The tall, bald-headed, silent man, leaned over to big Rosalie, and said in a low voice, "Count me in, too,—you're the *goods*!"

Then both men hurried away.

Big Rosalie and little Rosalie chatted together gayly, and ate ice-cream and macaroons.

The men were not gone long.

When they returned big Rosalie called one of the men in aprons, and said:

"Bring me one of those brass finger-bowls; and tell your boss I want to buy it."

Her order was obeyed. Into the small

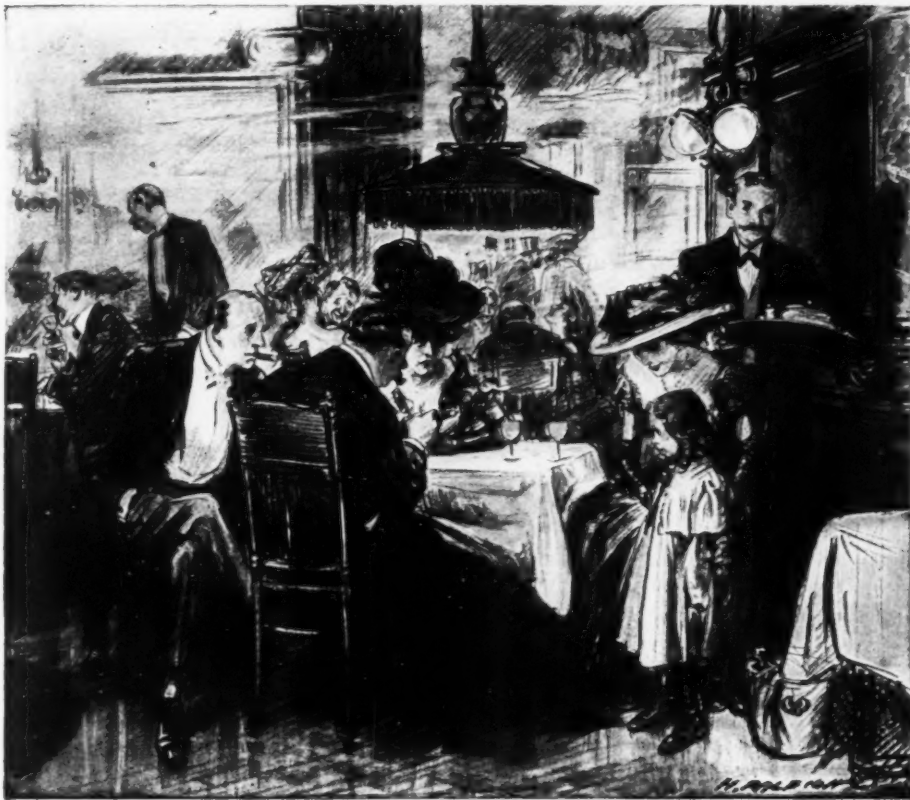
brass bowl a clicking stream of gold was poured.

"Here is the pot of gold, little kid," said big Rosalie, tying the finger-bowl and its contents up in a napkin. "Mr. Fred found it for you under the rainbow—and now we will take you home in Mr. Fred's car. Are you coming with us, Trixie?"

"No," said the second young lady, somewhat sullenly. "Take the kid home, and for heaven's sake get through with your foolishness."

And then, homeward through the maze of streets lying eastward, little Rosalie was borne in the wagon without horses, clasped in the arms of big Rosalie, while the fat man drove the car, and the bald-headed man smoked a cigar and silently watched.

The motor drew up in front of the house by the park. The tall man suddenly threw away his cigar.



"I am looking for the pot of gold"



"We'll cut out the rest of it and beat it for Texas!"

The light of a nearby lamp flashed fully upon big Rosalie's face as she turned and confronted the tall man, and little Rosalie wondered why she looked so strange.

"Say it soon and sudden, Fred," was the response. "The kid's sleepy and her mother must be simply wild about her."

The fat man looked at them very curiously from his place at the driving-wheel.

"Rosalie," said the big tall man, leaning forward and looking full into the eyes of the pink-cheeked young lady, "I've thought of saying this before to-night, but perhaps it aint too late: Will you drive with me to the Little Church Around the Corner?"

"God!" whispered Rosalie hoarsely, her pink cheeks very pink, for beneath the pink she was utter white; "God! Fred! do you mean—"

"Yes," said Fred. "Yes, and then we'll cut out the—well, the rainbow, and the rest of it and beat it for Texas—where I belong. Damn this town!"

"Hold on a minute!" he said, as big Rosalie opened the door of the tonneau. "Hold on a minute, Rosalie! I want to

say something to you while that kid's here."

"Oh, Rosalie! You kid! Kiss me, quick!" whispered the yellow haired girl, straining the child to her trembling heart.

"Here's a hug *and* a kiss," said the little Rosalie, throwing her arms about her namesake's neck.

"Rosalie!" cried a man's loud voice from a window above them.

"My father is calling me; give me my pot of gold!" said little Rosalie, wriggling in the yellow-haired girl's embrace.

She was kissed violently, vehemently, passionately—again, and again, and again; the pot of gold was thrust into her arms, and then—why, then her father was holding and hugging her, and the automobile, with its horn blowing loudly, was vanishing around the corner.

It was all over.

"But I wonder why the pretty lady cried when she kissed me!" said Rosalie sleepily, as she cuddled down in her father's arm. "My face is all wet, and so is the pot of gold."

Miss Anybody

BY JOHN BARTON OXFORD

Author of "The Reconciliation," etc.

BROPHY, swimming leisurely shoreward against the ebbing tide, watched sharply the bobbing red cap of the girl who swam in the same direction some dozen yards ahead of him. Behind them the line of bathing-rafts rose and fell on the long swells, and ahead was Willow Park, its garish domes and towers looming against the afternoon sky, and its smooth, hard beach swarming with the half-holiday crowd.

In the shallow water nearer the shore, a host of noisy bathers splashed and screamed; but Brophy and the girl in the red cap were the only ones who had ventured out to the rafts. It was a long swim back, especially with the tide ebbing strongly, and Brophy noticed that the girl's strokes were becoming shorter and shorter, and that the periods when she rested, treading water, were growing more frequent.

Presently, with a few determined strokes, he was beside her. The beach was yet a long, hard swim distant.

"You shouldn't have tried it," said Brophy quietly, "especially with the tide against you coming back. You are tired out. Can't I help you?"

The girl gave him a glance of cold disapproval from her gray eyes, and then without a word struck out resolutely.

Brophy shut his teeth at the rebuff and swam doggedly in her wake. But a few yards further on the girl's distress was so evident that he again quickened his own strokes and once more reached her side.

"You'll not make it," he declared. "You'll have to let me help you whether you want to or not, for, as usual, the life-guards are flirting down there by the pier and you might go under forty times, for all they'd know of it. Put your

hands on my shoulders; I'll help you the rest of the way in."

She looked him over thoughtfully, as if she were taking his measure, murmured "Thank you," a bit breathlessly, he thought, and the next minute her hands rested lightly on his big shoulders and Brophy was taking them through the water with his strong, clean strokes.

When they reached the shallow, the hands were withdrawn from his shoulders, and the girl, finding her feet, waded beside him to the beach. She was decidedly attractive, Brophy decided. Her mouth and chin were firm and resolute, but the upturned nose gave a certain piquancy to her small, round face. From beneath the bathing-cap a single strand of copper-colored hair strayed rebelliously.

"Thank you. You were very good," she said, as they reached the beach.

Then, she walked briskly towards the bathing pavilion.

Brophy stood watching her until she disappeared.

"My, my, the independence of her!" he chuckled, as he, too, strode towards the pavilion to dress.

A half hour later, as he strolled aimlessly along the beach, he saw her sitting in the sand; a green parasol was raised over her head and an open book was in her lap. As he passed her, she looked up from her book. A twinkle of recognition came into the gray eyes; a hint of a smile lifted the corners of her mouth; the uptilted nose went just a fraction of an inch higher. Her head was inclined in a half nod.

Brophy lifted his hat, fully intending to walk on; but somehow, his feet refused to carry him farther. He stood looking down at her, somewhat embarrassed, somewhat uncomfortable, but with a certain distinct pleasure taking

sudden and unexpected possession of him.

"I—I hope you are none the worse for the swim," he stammered awkwardly.

"Not a bit," said she.

Brophy looked doubtfully at the sand beside her. A slow red crept into his face. It was a homely, good-natured face—the sort of a face to inspire confidence.

"May I sit down?" he suggested.

The girl looked at him again, with that same measuring glance she had given him in the water; then she smiled and inclined her head in assent.

They talked—rather haltingly at first—of the weather, the water, the crowd at the park; and Brophy, his eyes ostensibly on the ocean, but in reality covertly scanning the girl beside him, was aware of a most pleasing sense of contentment.

"I was just going up to dinner at the sea-grill," he said tentatively at length. "I'd like—that is, if you don't mind—I thought perhaps you'd come, too."

The girl laughed. "Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'll go on one condition—that you'll let me pay my own way."

"Is the condition absolute?" he asked.

"Absolute," she replied.

"Oh, all right," Brophy laughed. "I'll accept it. My name—"

The girl held out a warning hand. "Don't spoil it all," she said lightly. "You are Mr. Somebody and I am Miss Anybody and this is the country of Anywhere. We can have a jolly time for the rest of the day, if you'll leave it like that."

Brophy grinned his amusement. "I agree. Come on, Miss Anybody," said he, jumping up and helping her to her feet.

Brophy had never spent such a wholly enjoyable time in his life as that afternoon proved to be. After dinner they went the round of Willow Park's varied and hair-raising amusements; they strolled together on the beach; they watched the bathers tumbling about in the surf; they shared peanuts and popcorn and amazing, sticky confections done up in gay colored paper. And every time her gay laughter rang out, or her

nose uptilted in that wholly adorable fashion, Brophy was aware of a strange and growing disturbance in the region of his heart.

The roofs and towers were outlined with twinkling lights, and every incoming train was packed with the evening crowds, when the girl announced she must return to the city.

"You'll let me go back on the train with you—as far as the station at least, won't you?" Brophy urged.

"As far as the station," she conceded.

All the way up, the impending parting with her loomed like some great and portentous disaster in the background of Brophy's mind. But it was not until the train was pulling into the gloomy station that he broached the subject uppermost in his harassed thoughts.

"Look here, Miss Anybody," said he with conviction, "I thought this afternoon the way we planned it would be all right. But it isn't. You must let me see you again—you must."

The train had come to a stop; the passengers were filing out of the stuffy cars. The girl's face took on a beautiful color.

"Well?" she challenged over her shoulder, as she moved before him down the crowded aisle.

"Let me call," said he. "May I?"

"Oh, yes," she laughed. "if you like."

"Where?" said Brophy eagerly. "What is the address?"

They had reached the platform now. The girl's head was turned from him.

"At home, of course," she answered with a nervous giggle.

"And home—where is home?" Brophy pleaded.

"In the country of Anywhere," she mocked.

At that moment a card-case slipped from her belt and landed on the platform at their feet. Brophy bent to pick it up, and as he did so, his eyes fell on a bit of paper with a name and address upon it, which had jolted out of one of the pockets of the little leather case. He crushed it in his hand as he handed the card-case to the girl.

"Thank you," she said. "It has been a splendid afternoon, hasn't it? Good-by, Mr. Somebody."

The next minute she had slipped into the crowd and was gone; but Brophy was smiling serenely as he unfolded the bit of paper in his hand and read:

MISS ELIZABETH CARTER
22 THORNDIKE ST.

It was written in ink on an ordinary bit of note-paper. In one corner, in pencil, was the further information:

Wednesday at 5:30

Brophy chuckled delightedly. "Well, well," he observed, "wasn't that the neat way of telling me, though; dropping the card-case like that and letting it fall out careless-like? 5:30 Wednesday, is it? No fear; I'll be there, Miss Anybody, *alias* Miss Elizabeth Carter."

Still chuckling, he stalked out of the station with quickened pulses, and a feeling that he had been suddenly elevated to the clouds. The display in a florist's window caught his eye. Brophy entered and ordered with discrimination.

"Send them to Miss Elizabeth Carter of 22 Thorndike Street," he instructed: "the roses to-day, the pinks Monday, the violets Tuesday, and the orchids Wednesday."

Then he walked up-town, his mind full of the most entrancing pictures, in which a small, round face with a turned-up nose and a frame of copper-colored hair was the central figure.

It was just five o'clock Wednesday afternoon when Brophy left the office of the Electric Switch Company, of which he was head bookkeeper, and caught a car that would take him past Thorndike Street. At precisely twenty minutes past the hour he stood in the vestibule of an apartment-house, with a chuckle of anticipation at the card over the bell of Suite 8, which bore the name: "T. F. Carter."

He rang the bell and pressed his ear to the tube.

"Who is it?" came a faint voice presently.

Brophy grinned. "Mr. Somebody," he replied.

"Who?" the voice inquired.

"Mr. Somebody," Brophy repeated, raising his voice.

"Oh, is it you, Tom?"

The smile died a swift death on Brophy's lips. "No, it is not Tom," said he. "It is Mr. Somebody, otherwise Edward F. Brophy."

"Whom did you wish to see?" the voice at the other end of the tube inquired with some asperity.

"Miss Carter—Miss Elizabeth Carter. Is she in?"

For answer the latch on the vestibule-door began clicking its invitation to be opened. Brophy pushed open the door and went up the stairs three at a time. At the top of the third flight a door was open, and framed in the doorway stood a girl.

"Is Miss Carter in?" Brophy panted.

"I am Miss Carter," said the girl.

"Miss Elizabeth Carter, I mean," said Brophy.

"I am Miss Elizabeth Carter."

Brophy fumbled his hat and stared his incredulity. The girl in the doorway was regarding him questioningly.

"Did you have a message for me?" she asked.

Brophy ran his hand through his hair. He coughed. Then he thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a crumpled bit of paper.

"Maybe you can tell me something about this," he suggested, holding it out to her.

The girl took the paper and glanced at it.

"Oh, yes. I see," she said. "They have sent you. Step in, please."

Utterly bewildered, Brophy followed her into a cozy living-room and sat down on the edge of a Morris chair; but scarcely had he done so when the bell in the hall whirled.

The girl stepped to the tube in the hall.

"Yes?" Brophy heard her call. "Who? Oh, it's you, Tom. Come up."

He heard her open the door and the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

"Did you get my letter, Tom?" he heard the girl say to the newcomer. "I'd never, never in the world have forgiven you or written you to come if it hadn't been for what you did. It was

perfectly dear of you. They came every day. Oh, you needn't—look so innocent. I'm talking, of course, about the flowers you sent. The first ones came the very day we had the tiff—not an hour after you left the house."

"Aha!" muttered Brophy under his breath, so the truth began to dawn upon him.

"Go into the den," the girl was rattling on, "and smoke if you like. There's a man in the living-room waiting for the vase. I'll get it for him and be right back."

The next minute the girl entered the living-room, bearing in her arms a large Canton vase, one side of which was badly shattered. Before Brophy could protest she had placed it in his arms.

"All the pieces are inside," said she. "Tell them to be sure not to have the rivets show. And ask them to drop me a line when I may call for it."

"But—but—" began Brophy.

Before he got any further in his stammered protestations, however, the bell was whirring again.

Again the girl stepped to the tube in the hall.

"Well?" Brophy heard her say. "Oh, yes.—The man has just called for it.—*What?* You didn't send any man?—Well, he is here, anyway, and I have just given him the vase.—Perhaps you'd best come up and see about it."

Brophy, listening, felt the hot blood in his cheeks. What sort of a mix-up was he in for, anyway? He set the vase on the floor and squared his shoulders, the while he began mentally to formulate his explanation.

Then some one came through the door, looked at him, gasped, and crimsoned beautifully, and Brophy jumped to his feet, overturning the vase with a crash, and stood there beaming beatitudes; for on the threshold hesitated the girl of Willow Park.

"It's all right then, is it, Miss Dolan?" the other girl was saying. "You sent him, did you?"

"No; I didn't send him; but it's all right."

She stepped towards the vase at Brophy's feet, "I'll take it back with me," said she.

Brophy grinned. "I had best carry it. It's pretty heavy," said he, and stooping, picked up the vase.

The beatitudes were still radiating from his countenance as he followed Miss Dolan into the hall and the door of the flat closed upon them, leaving them there alone.

"Well?" she said shortly, and with a flash of fire in her eyes.

Brophy began to laugh. "Let's begin at the beginning," said he. "It was this that made all the trouble."

He drew the bit of paper from his pocket and held it out to her.

She glanced at it with a puzzled frown.

"Where did you get it?" she asked.

"It fell out of your card-case at the station," said he, "and I thought—"

He paused.

"What was it you thought?" she asked coldly.

"That it was your way of letting me know who you were and where you lived," said he. "I'm glad though, now, that I was wrong," he ended thoughtfully.

Her face was very grave, but in the gray eyes that looked at him steadily was something very like a twinkle.

"And you came up here to-day expecting to find me?" she asked.

"More than that," said he boldly. "I've sent up flowers every day to sort of pave the way for the event."

Her lips curled. She caught her breath.

"Go on," she commanded.

"But the flowers I sent weren't wasted," he explained. "It seems they served to patch up a row between Miss Carter and Tom, whoever he may be; or at least they will patch it up, if he has the good sense to keep quiet, as I've no doubt he has."

She was plainly struggling to keep down her mirth.

"Well," she said, "you had better give me the vase now."

Brophy gripped it more tightly.

"Never," he declared. "Anyway, not until this matter is cleared up a bit farther. My name is Brophy—Edward F. Brophy."

The girl smiled. She drew the card-

case from her belt, and opening it, silently handed Brophy a card.

THE CHINA MENDING SHOP

CHINA, BRIC-A-BRAC, AND ALL FRAGILE WEAR

MADE AS GOOD AS NEW

MARY K. DOLAN, 178 TRAVERS ST.

"Now give me the vase," she said.

"You'd best let me carry it for you," replied Brophy, leading the way down the stairs.

At the corner, where they waited for a down-town car, he drew out the card he had slipped into his pocket, and fell to studying it with an absorbed frown.

"All fragile ware made as good as new," he read musingly. "I think I've

something that needs the attention of your shop," he observed.

"Yes?" she asked.

He looked at her gravely, and then came a step nearer. "Ever since that day at the park," he said in a low voice, "yes, ever since the minute you put your hands on my shoulders when I was swimming in with you, my heart has been busted into more smithereens than any bit of china you ever mended. It strikes me it's up to you to mend it. Will you—please?"

"I have never undertaken any work of that kind," she said, her head turned from him, "but I suppose—perhaps—I might try."

They That Take the Sword

BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN W. NORTON

THE trainmen in the red, stubby caboose were strong captains in the war with hoboes. Flocking to the Dakota harvest, the vagrants were met by a bitter skirmish at every station. It was a time of hard fists.

The caboose bobbed along at the end of freight No. 211. The conductor, having weighed the weather, jingled the medallion on his brass watch-chain, and suggested to the swing-brakeman:

"Guess you'll find some 'boes in the empties at Joralemon, Barney."

Barney Chisholm, lolling on the black oil-cloth of the opposite seat, was studying the Indian maiden who disappeared on a brewing-company's calendar.

"Yup! Betcher neck," replied Barney. "Plenty of 'em, all right. But I'll nail 'em. Oh, I'm death to the 'boes! I'm a reg'lar devil, *hein?*"

He cocked his decrepit cheroot a little higher on the left, and curved his black slouch hat a little lower on the right, to keep the symmetry appropriate to a swing brakie who was death to 'boes.

"You'd be a regular devil all right, I guess, if you wasn't always smoking them cherootees," guffawed the conductor. "They smell like rope, now don't they?" he appealed.

"They hurting you any?" roared Barney.

"Oh, I aint *kicking*, but—Say, Oley," the conductor shouted to the trainman in the cupola, "don't them cherootees smell up the place, all the time!"

"Ah, t'ell with 'em," growled down the man on watch, weary of these constant rows.

Barney, who could not see the last speaker from his seat, scowled at a really inoffensive cupboard, and turned the tail-end of his scowl on a traveling-man, who was "making" the town of Wakamin on the freight. The drummer, yawning ostentatiously, retreated to the rear door of the caboose and gazed at the fenceless sweep of October stubble.

Barney proceeded to boast his right to smoke what and when he wished.

"I tell you there aint nobody got nothing on me," he insisted.

"I aint trying to get nothing on you," whined the conductor.

"I'm going farming," snapped the spirit of revolt. "I'm getting prett' near tired of havin' you galoots think you can boss me."

"Aw, we aint. What's the use of fighting Barney?"

"Whistling for Mile Bridge," interrupted Oley, leaning from the cupola. "Now for the 'boes, *hein*, Barney?"

"Betcher neck," said Barney, blithe again.

The front and middle brakemen climbed out of the cars, as it is commanded in the rules for trainmen laid down by the Heirs of Greatness. The freight creaked to a standstill in the Joralemon yards; presently, crawled down a side-track. Barney hung out from the high rear platform. When the caboose was nearly opposite the red, frame station, he leaped down and ran beside the train, waving his extended arms in a

signal for brakes. The setting sun was reflected from the nicked plate stamped "Brakeman," on his proudly slouched hat. His black silk 'kerchief fluttered bravely.

As the engineer put on the air, Barney's arms dropped to his side with a smack. He picked up a coupling-pin and started forward, his feet swiftly scattering the cinders.

Into each empty car he thrust a sideling head, and blinked into the dimness. Four times he made-out forms in the corners, crouching on the litter of straw

or sawdust. He demanded of each stow-away:

"Hey, Bill, got any money?"

"Nope," the most answered.

"Come out of it, then."

"All right, Bill!"

Those without a quarter, the fashionable bribe on that division, sneaked sheepishly off, to hide behind the water-tank until the train started again.

"Give yuh fifteen cents," ventured one tramp.

"You git," snarled Barney.

"As bad to let 'em off for less'n a quarter as not to divvy up with the other brakies," formulated Barney, honest grafter that he was. "Hang the dirty bums!"

Now there was a *clean* bum, a particularly and offensively clean bum, in an "empty" opposite the section-house. His overalls and patched jumper smacked of the man seeking a job. Under a thatch of rusty hair, his brows were tilted



"Rusty"

cockily above his wily eyes; for the right brow ended in a little white scar.

Barney looked on him contemptuously, and made his dutiful demand for a quarter. The tramp approached, obsequiously, till he was within a yard of Barney's right hand, which was tapping the iron pin on the car floor. With a rush, the tramp kicked at the pin, and sent it sailing by Barney's arm. It clanged on a rail of the main-track, and crunched down into the cinders.

Barney hesitated. The rusty-haired tramp was so near, the little scar on

his forehead quivered so curiously, that it really did not seem good form to turn his back and retrieve the pin. So he seized the hobo's baggy overalls.

But the other pulled himself free and retreated.

"Look a' here, Bill," urged the tramp, "I aint got no quarter. But I'm a union man—Teamsters' Union, Chicago Local 59. I just kicked that coupling-pin so's you'd listen to me. Look a' here, old man, here's my card, and I'm a hard-working man."

"No union cards goes no more," snapped the brakeman. "Come out of it, I say."

"But look a' here, you've probably got a woman and some kids yourself, aint you?"

Barney had not. He said so, and he hinted an earnest objection to such hindrances.

"But say, old man," the tramp pursued, "I've been working like the deuce, but everything's on the pazaz. I aint had my three squares since us teamsters went out, and the old woman and the kids is working at Deering. There wasn't nothing doing in Chi., for me, and the Kansas broom-corn harvest was on the bum. Say, I'll get two seventy-five harvesting in Dakota, and I'll pay you the two bits, and then some, 'f I see you on my way back. I'm—"

With stony disdain Barney had endured thus much.

"Aw, you fellows, make me tired with your hard luck stories," he declared. "You never did no work in your life, or you wouldn't be on your uppers. Hard luck! Why, you—"

"Look a' my mits, old man," pleaded the tramp, undisturbed. "See them cal-louses."

Barney advanced his hand, but it was the tramp's jumper that he grabbed. Jerking quickly, savagely, he dragged his man from the car and rubbed his head on the ground.

The hobo slouched from the yards.

"Guess that 'll hold you, Rusty. No bum's cute enough to jolly me," Barney muttered, as he ground through the cinders to the next empty. "I'm death to the hoboes, all right, all right," he chuckled.

Dusk had knit before the train reached Wakamin. Frogs sang and lone bitterns boomed through the blackness which enveloped brown stubble and crimson leaves. The lakes and swamps were polished basalt and darkest garnet. The traveling man was dozing, his brass-buckled Oxfords propped on his bulging suit-case. The only man thoroughly awake in the little car was Barney Chisholm, on watch in the cupola and cleaning his wire-netted lantern. As he looked down the swaying runway, atop the cars, he partly realized the gipsy calm of the after-glow.

The train rattled to a halt at Wakamin.

The drummer donned his striped cuffs, and yawned in farewell:

"Gosh, it's a great night!"

Barney was distinctly cheerful. He whistled a corruption of "Daisy" as he started down the train in search of tramps. The swinging circle of light from his lantern touched the brown, grimy cars which were his work, his pride, his children. It glittered on wheel-flanges, shiny as silver. It threw his elongated shadow down the main track, and, as Barney danced in time to his whistling, the shadow capered with him.

The lantern's gleam showed a pair of heel-worn Congress shoes on the horizontal rods beneath a car. Barney ceased whistling and stooped. He made-out the face of a tramp with rusty hair, and a white scar on his brow.

The brakeman ran to the front end of the car and crossed the train, crawling over the bumpers. The hobo was now on his feet, facing Barney. His eyes glistened wilier than ever, and the little scar shared in his cocky grin. He spun about and ran, slovenly but confidently.

Confused in the wavering light, he tripped on a rail. Barney pounced on him. Rusty kicked strenuously. His active feet caught the lantern and sent it flying. With crashing glass and bending metal, it plumped on a tie. As the wick flared, in dying, Barney saw the tramp pull a great jack-knife, a "toad stabber," from his pocket. He caught Rusty's wrist, but the man was twisting free.

"Hey, Rube," yelled Barney, like a circus-man.

The front brakeman galloped up, and fell on the tramp, joyously.

This ally expected a blast of black fury, when they had kicked the tramp from the yards.

But Barney laughed: "Wish we c'd fix 'em all that way. Beat their ears off. Well, I guess we wont hear from Rusty again."

The train ambled on toward New Antonia. With cherubic friendliness, Barney played "cinch" with the conductor, humming his monotonous corruption of "Daisy." At New Antonia he made careful search for the rusty-haired hobo, and rejoiced in not finding him. A new-comer tramp, in an empty, gave Barney a nickel cigar, plus his quarter. They switched a few cars, and the train slowly puffed up the next long grade.

Smoking his cigar, and flourishing a new lantern, Barney cheerfully swayed along the train. The benevolent *hauteur*, proper in so great a swing-brakeman, showed in every devil-may-care line of his sateen shirt with its red sleeve-supporters, and in the swagger of his loose vest. As he crossed a flat-car laden with a threshing engine, Barney saw, between the great wheels, the Congress shoe — of Rusty!

He walked on, climbed the next box-car, and slammed his lantern down on the forward end. Noiseless, amid the slow rattle of wheels and the creak of car-joints, Barney crept back to the threshing engine. Quickly ducking, he dragged Rusty out, and hurled him from the flat-car. He waved his cigar in fantastic farewell, the crimson end glowing in wreathed circles.

He shouted, for his own benefit:

"By-by, baby. Guess you wont never be on another train with me; but hope I meet you—later!"

The tramp had bunted wildly down the embankment, pebbles grinding into his skin, but, at the bottom, he landed on his broad, capable feet. The train had been moving so slowly that, though he staggered forward at a dangerous slant, he was saved from falling by a pile of discarded ties.

His fist half sunk in rotten wood. He

came to a stop with a thud of his chest, unhappy but unhurt.

Promptly he pulled a revolver from his rear pocket. At the dimly seen, bizarre circles of Barney's cigar he fired furiously.

Over the brakeman's head whistled a bullet. Barney gasped. His left arm smarted with a stinging blow, followed by a second report. He crouched quickly. About him the bullets went "zin-n-ng."

He climbed back to the caboose, where the front brakeman tied up the damaged arm with Barney's black silk 'kerchief.

"You'll see the company doctor at Ferguston?" suggested the front brakeman."

"Yuh!"

"Guess we can both give 'em a description of that 'bo. They'll get him, some place along the line, and jug him, all right."

"Look here," stormed Barney, "don't you go to giving no description. I want to tend to that—myself. Wouldn't I like to meet him! When I do—!"

Barney was sitting in his sister's kitchen at Ferguston, taking a week's lay-off, to allow the flesh-wound recovery. That he might nourish revenge, he had adjured poker and the Bijou News Store's brand of gossip. He was leaning back in a wooden bottomed chair, his feet propped on the oven door. With his right hand, Barney dragged to and fro a coupling-pin tied on a fish-line. It was a very useful coupling-pin indeed, one permanently borrowed from the railroad for the driving of nails. But it was now especially useful, for, as he towed it, to Barney's notion it represented not a Teddy Bear nor a toy cart, but the hobo with rusty hair. The neck of the pin was Rusty's neck, and the attached fish-line was a lariat. Rusty would have been annoyed, had it been his very self that the brakeman viciously jerked back and forth from his tilted chair. Barney's expression was scarcely the jocund fancy of make-believe!

"I'd like to have Rusty on this line," he pondered. "May-be this is kid's play, but— Or, say, 'f I could get a chance to give this pin a good swing and let 'er drive at his head! Slam him with it



"Guess you'll find some 'boes in the empties at Joralemon, Barney"

from underneath when he was laying on the rods. Let's see; 'f I was on the front bumpers I could trail it under, this way; let it slide back when the train moved. It'd keep bobbing till the cord was paid out, and when it got half-way back — Reg'lar sledge-hammer! Gosh, they'd have to scrape Rusty offen the pin. — *Say!* Why couldn't that be done? I b'lieve it could!"

Barney sat motionless. His right hand, holding the fish-line, remained extended, a moment. His eyes, fixed on the kitchen clock, took in, not the oaken cherubs, but a vision of victorious struggle.

"Some day, Rusty'll have something to do with this little teaser," he declaimed, "and it'll be unpleasant for somebody. 'S help me, I hope it'll be *wer-ee* unpleasant!"

Thus the famous and infamous "'Bo Teaser" was invented. In Barney's

eyes were uncanny shadows. It was, in some sort, his moment of greatness.

His arm dropped. Calmly, he began to plan the Teaser's use. A weight, fastened to a coil of flexible telegraph-wire, was to slide back half the length of a car. The trainman at the front end could fish for a tramp beneath very nicely!

His scheme entertained Barney through the week, and he carried it to the division superintendent. The official, an agreeable gentleman, whose pet "Band of Mercy" was justly popular in Ferguston, was exceedingly pleased by the ingenuity of this lesson for the unlessoned. Very few M. & D. magnates knew of the swing-brakeman's share in the invention of the "'Bo Teaser," but the superintendent received proper credit and he generously used his pull to get Barney a freight-conductorship.

A group of tramps lolled among the willows above the New Antonia lumberyard of an Autumn night. The nook, floored with trodden earth and provided with cooking utensils hammered from tin cans, was entered in the Hoboes' Blue Book. Between the dippy kid and the bearded tramp, who had been throwing his feet for a poke-out, a sturdy hobo with a tattered slouch hat over his eyes lay against a willow trunk, his arms behind his head. About his neck was a silk kerchief. The hobo's name was Barney Chisholm.

Barney drew out his corn-cob and spat cleverly at the little fire.

"Yuh!" he continued, in his intermittent monologue. "I was a freight-conductor on this division, four years ago."

"How d' you get on the rocks? Strike?" asked the bearded hobo.

"Sures' thing, you know. Remember the strike of 1900? I hated like Sam Hill to go out, because I took to train-service like a flea to a dog's back. I'd scrapped a good deal with the guys over me, but when it come to a strike I wanted to hang on, all right. Come prett' near busting a walking-delegate, or what d' you call em's head. But we had to go out. We was out for 'long about five months."

Barney aimlessly broke up a willow twig.

"I cer'nly had a bum time," he went on. "Nothing to do. When the strike was over, I was tickled foolish to get back on the job. But the M. & D. 'd swore they'd get rid of every man that'd had much of a part in the strike before they got through with us. And they done it, all right. Oh, I got it in the neck, right along with the rest of 'em!"

"Got bounced, eh?" propounded the bearded hobo, heavily.

"Betcher sweet life I did. Like to get hold of the High Mogul! Well, then I floated around. Struck the Big Four for a job brakin'. Big guy with chessy whiskers rubbers at me over his glasses and asks: 'What's your name?' I tells him, and he looks me up, and says: 'Don't want you.' I was on the black-list. And it aint any funny business to be blacklisted, and don't you forget it."

"You're whistling it aint," agreed the bearded hobo.

"It certainly must be a most uncomfortable situation," piped the new voice of a clean-shaven tramp-carpenter, "with an education and proud of it."

"Well, then I makes a stab at the K. & H., under another name," ruminated Barney. "Got a chance at brakin' when they was rushin' a bunch of coal through. I was making-out all right, happy's a bullhead in mud. But they must have pictures of the blacklisted guys, or something. Of course, they soaks it to me. Same every place I tried."

"Nothing doing, eh?" yawned the bearded hobo.

"On my uppers, ever since. On the bum, for fair. And I was kind o' hard on the 'boes myself, once! But I was square about it. Guess Luck's just got it in for me," puzzled Barney.

"Like bumming?"

"Not on your life!"

"Why don't you obtain a position in a factory?" condescended the tramp-carpenter.

"S this way," explained Barney, addressing the bearded hobo, after a glare at the educated one. "I've hankered for railroading ever since I was a kid. Used to jump the freight at Ferguston, where I was brung up, and drop off at the crossing. When I was watching 'em wipe the engines, at the round-house, I was tickled's a puppy if Hank'd let me shine up the whistle. But I never was satisfied till I got on as a brakie. You ought to seen me with the plate on me hat! Oh, I was the nifty lad, all right. Got this silk neck-han'kerchief then. Good rag. Wears fine. Rather switch, even on a dark night when the cars is covered with ice, than go fishing. After I was fired from the K. & H. I come back and tried farming. Good mun, but gosh! how I hated it!"

"They sure do keep you on the jump. Not much dossing," observed the dippy kid, knowingly.

"Aw, it wasn't that. It was the staying in one place, and hearing the rubes yap about the 'west forty' and the 'stacker.' When I'd see a freight come piking by, I was crazy to go with it.

Nights, I'd lie there in the attic, and listen to the clock-work buzzing in my head, till the 'Flyer' went by. Then I'd go down and kick the dog. Oh, I lasted quick on the farming racket!"

The silent tramp with the battered derby interrupted, to hint, in dragging monosyllables, of a similar trial.

"Yump," confirmed Barney. "I like my three squares a day, but just the same I've got to mosey around and see the country, and listen to the wheels. You know how they sound, '*rumpitup, rumpitup*.' Funny; I was dreaming to-day, when I was real busy pounding my ear in an empty, that this was my last day of bummin'."

The night had grown unholy dark. Lightning flashed through the willows. The dippy kid, in vague alarm, stood over the fire. The silent tramp was dozing. Save for low thunder, there was a forlorn stillness.

"There's the freight," exclaimed the bearded hobo, rising. "Be here in ten minutes. Me for an empty."

"Me for the rods," declared Barney. "They'll kick you out o' the empties, blame 'em!"

"Not for mine," grunted the bearded one. "Not on your life. This aint no ordinary riding, these days. It's a war with the brakies, that's what it is, since them strikes in Chi. Them brakies'll do anything. I've cut out riding the rods since they've took to using the 'Bo Teaser.' They're too likely to get you."

As Barney and his companions skulked from the willows toward the railroad-yards, the bearded hobo whispered:

"I'd like to know where that 'Bo Teaser' come from."

"How d'I know?" rasped Barney.

"Using it on every railroad in the country," continued the other. "No rods for me."

"Well, I aint going to hang onto no bumpers, or brake-beams, and I'll be hung if I'll give any blamed brakie a quarter for riding in an empty," growled Barney.

They crouched behind a pile of lumber. When the train showed an inclination to move on, Barney ran toward it with a couple of boards from the pile. He slid them across the rods beneath

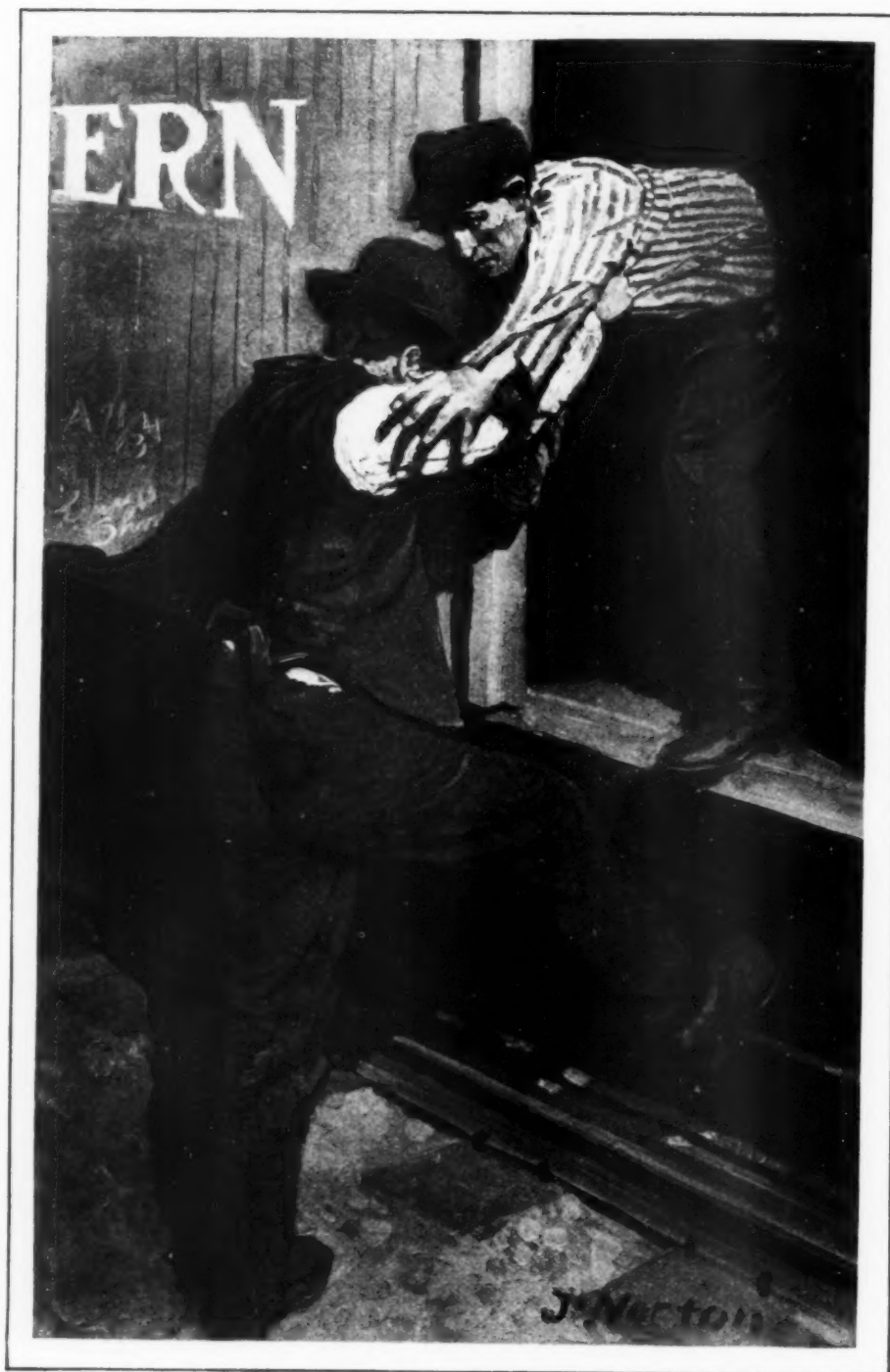
the car, fumbling in the great darkness. Head first, he wriggled across them; crawling gingerly around the rough end of the obtruding air-cylinder. After wrapping his greasy coat about his head to guard against flying cinders, he lay quiet, with the gloomy inactivity of the fatalist.

But the threatening challenge of the thunder, from out yonder in the blackness, disquieted the derelict. There were no companions and no fire to brighten that obscurity where enemies might lurk. He did not analyze his feelings, but Barney was naïvely uneasy. The wanderer's instinct for danger, which had been forged in wash-out and collision and pointed in weary nights of roaming, was pricking him. As the train started, he twitched the coat from his eyes and stared ahead, beneath the car, haggardly alarmed at nothing.

The train crossed a bridge, a hundred yards from the station. As Barney's car pounded over, a flash of lightning illuminated the world. It showed the swarthy river, far below the narrow stringers of the trestle, which seemed too frail a support to save the train from plunging to where a little yellow foam eddied about a drift-log. Reflected from the ugly waters, the swift light flashed along the bottom of the car. Barney looked up from the river. Instantly the leaping glare quivered again, for a moment only. It sufficed to show—an iron coupling-pin, under the front of the car. It was fast to a wire, taut over the brake-beam. It bounded up and backward as it thumped each stringer; creeping back—back—toward him, an inch at each bound, as the kinks in the wire were straightened.

Lying rigid, Barney did not cover his eyes again, but stared into the thunderous darkness, where the eager weight, straining on its tether, was trailing toward him, shameless and relentless as if leashed by the inventor himself.

From recollection, it was easy to picture the trainman, up there ahead, on the bumpers. Who was he, anyway? Perhaps, one of his former fellows. When the wire was quite uncoiled, the man would be hauling it back and forth, from side to side, making sure that his



He dragged his man from the car

flail reached the whole center of the car. He would keep a tight grip on the brake-rod, lest he slip between the cars. He would chuckle a little, as he stooped and jerked the wire. Safe on the unthreatened bumpers, he would be very careful not to drop his fishing-tackle, for it was bothersome to make a new one! And he would remember what was to be done at the next station: the Thing to be taken from the rods; the stout lies about "an accident to a tramp."

So came Barney to see himself as he soon would be, when the bouncing death had finished. Refusing, at first, to realize that *he* was in this net, he was forced into poignant farewell to his own existence, with a feeling too confusing for the recall of any specific details of life. Yet he did recognize, in a hastening scene, his invention of that creeping Horror. His dry lips could not compass the name "'Bo Teaser," at first. The mocking words were sacrilege in this stress. When he did pronounce them, he mouthed them, shouted them, with vast, incoherent curses. Why had the flying death not reached him? Of course, he was at home, dragging about the floor a fish-line tied to a coupling-pin, and that pin was Rusty the hobo. Then Barney fainted.

He awoke to wonder why the trade-name stamped on the rod he was clutching had not been worn smoother by the grip of tramps who had thus waited—waited, perhaps, for Barney Chisholm to finish the work!

He roused from stupor at intervals, to rage at the trainman who was still playing with his victim.

From wanderings in centuries of darkness, Barney returned to discover that the train was stopping. With an effort, he peered sidelong, and saw, by an arc-light swung near by, that they were in a railroad yard. He tried to sit upright. The bumping of his head was sweet pain. He gaped in heavy wonder. For the iron pin had not been fancied. It was being withdrawn. In the arc-glare he could see it bump from tie to tie.

"Well I'll be hung," a voice at his head droned, through the mist enveloping Barney's wits. "Didn't get you, eh?

I *thought* the wire was too short, after I cut it off."

Languidly, Barney began to crawl across his board roost. An arm over his shoulder, grasping his vest, aided him. He tried to stand, then to run, which he seemed to remember had been the custom, somewhere and sometime, when hoboes were hauled from the rods by brakemen.

He staggered a step, fell limply toward the man and sprawling looked at him—a brakeman with rusty hair, blackish in the arc's light, and with a little, white scar at the end of his right eyebrow! In the trainman's wily eyes was neither recognition nor enmity, but, rather, a sort of compassion.

"I'm glad I didn't get you," grinned Rusty. "First time I've tried this stunt. D' you know, I was after you with the 'Bo Teaser?"

"Yes," said Barney, simply.

"Golly but you look done up. I'm a fool, of course—but I was a 'bo once myself, before I took to brakin'. Can't have you looking that way. I'm going to stick you in a box-car and give you a chance to buck up. But you'll have to take a sneak, at Porterre."

He picked Barney up, baldly dumped him into an empty, and hurried down the line of cars.

Crawling to the end of the car Barney set his back against a grain-door.

"I've learned mine," he said, over and over. "It's up to me to buckle down to business and make up for—for being a blamed hound. That was Rusty. It's his fault, his using the Teaser. Got to keep him from going the same way. And I've got to get to work, even if they don't want me for a brakie. Get to work at something. I'm—oh, what the deuce do they call it?—converted!"

Barney's mind had become very clear, but he was too weak to formulate certain strange, deep things he had learned. Very profanely and very earnestly, he repeated his vague, deathless resolves until he fell asleep.

At Porterre, Rusty wriggled his lantern at the car-door, with grinning intentness, and blustered:

"Git out a' here, now. To the woods!"

Barney climbed out.

"Just a minute, old man," he pleaded. "I aint battering no grub and I aint asking no ride. I want to speak to you about—about keeping straight."

"So you're one of them religious ducks?" quizzed Rusty.

"Not on your life. But when I was—down there—with that thing sneaking up on me, I got onto what it was to be a—skunk and go killing things. Yes, sir, I cer'nly did," insisted he, pugnacious for the cause. "I was a brakie once and I've used the 'Bo Teaser'. But now—

"There's a farmer out here that's always keeping a job open for me and I'm going to take it. No more bumming in mine. But first—for God's sake, man, can't you see how I mean it? Look at me! Next time, before you use the 'Teaser,' just figure out how you'd feel if you was the 'bo.'"

"Maybe you're right," granted Rusty. "I was on the road myself, for a while,

and I've been a mutt to forget it so easy. But I've never used the 'Teaser' before. Wont again. Don't need to. I'm a fool but—thanks, old man!"

He gripped Barney's hand and crunched away. In that hand he left a quarter.

The train wheezed in starting. Barney carefully tucked the quarter into his vest-pocket comb-case, muttering:

"I'll keep that two-bits rest of my life. And if any gazabo tries to swipe it—!"

He drew off his black silk 'kerchief and smoothed it.

"I'll give him that, when I see him again," he reflected. "It's a darn good neck-han'kerchief. Handy for a brakie, too."

He crossed the railroad-yards, passed through the sleeping streets, and struck out for the farming country. He wavered and limped; he often sat to rest; but he whistled "Daisy" very happily.

Gramper

BY ISABEL McDOUGALL

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

THIS is your train," said Patty's cousin. "Here is your umbrella. Here are Jefferson Purdy's flowers. No, indeed. I wont take them. He'd like that, wouldn't he? Here's his candy. I wonder why he didn't come to see you off."

"I wonder," said Patty mendaciously.

"Pile them on the seat so no one can take it. You were foolish not to go in the parlor-car; this one is going to be very crowded and it would make a better impression on the Wilcoxes. I wonder what they will be like."

"I wonder, too," said the girl, with more truth this time.

"It ought to be a comfortable house anyhow. Mrs. Wilcox's father built it for her when she married. He is the Howard Johnston who founded the 'H. J. Watch Co.' I seem to remember hearing," she mused, "that H. J. himself is

a good deal of a sport. But that needn't trouble you. He is not one of your pupils. For that matter, Patty Elliott, I can't see why you want to go governessing when there's Jefferson Purdy. Don't you like Jefferson?"

Patty meditatively smoothed out a wrinkle in a small wash-leather glove.

"I—don't like his hair," she concluded.

"You perverse creature! Well, good-by. Anything more unlike a nursery governess than you in that hydrangea hat is not visible to the naked eye."

It was a crowded car. Before long a stout, elderly man lurched down the aisle, banging his suit-case from side to side and looking vaguely about.

"Sh—sheat engazhed, lady?"

And Patty had to clear away her defenses.

She shrank close to the window and out of it watched the marshes slide by, the winding creek, and the occasional white sail so far out among the rushes that it looked as if it were moving through a meadow.

The man beside her mopped a bald, exuding brow, then spoke to her. "Sh—hot, isn't it?"

"Very," she answered, and anxiously inquired of the conductor how soon they would reach Netherlands.

"Due at 3:28 and on time," he responded briefly.

"Going to Never—Neverlandsh?" her neighbor asked affably. "Goin' m'self. Live zhere. Daughter livesh zhere. Know ev'body in plashe. 'N' ev'body knows me," he boasted. "Alwaysh lived zhere. Alwaysh goin' to live zhere."

He babbled on to the back of a hydrangea hat and a small pink ear which only turned when the welcome voice of the conductor reached it once more.

"There's a seat in the next car that will suit you better than this, lady. I'll move your things."

Patty sank gratefully into a new place.

"Thank you, so much. Oh! but the suit-case is not mine."

They read the half effaced lettering:

H. J. _____
NETHERLANDS, L. I.

"All right," said the conductor, "I'll take it back to him. I guess 'H. J.' is a good deal of a sport."

"H. J. is a good deal of a sport," Patty repeated to herself.

Where had she heard that before! Mrs. Wilcox's father!

At Netherlands, automobiles, village-carts driven by girls in white, smart

station-wagons with grooms in sedate brown or gray, and a few ramshackle cabs met the train and filled rapidly. A group of sun-burned, well dressed men from the parlor-car joked each other in the last auto, while the best dressed and most sun-burnt of them settled some matter with the baggage-master.

Patty looked in vain for a conveyance from the Wilcoxes.

"'Scushe me, mish: theshe your'h?"

Old H. J. emerged painfully from the last cab, hugging to his breast Jefferson Purdy's battered roses, strewing Jefferson Purdy's chocolates over the platform.

"Oh, no!" Patty backed away with her hands behind her. "No, indeed!"

"Yesh, my dear, they're yoursh," he insisted. "Jush shlookin' after 'em

for you. Alwaysh looksh after pretty girlsh. Give you a lul-lift in village vehic-hic-hicle?"

Thank heaven the baggage-house hid her from the merry men of the auto!

Then forth from the baggage-room issued one of them, with laughter in the gleam of his white teeth, and in his eyes.

"This person is annoying you, is he not? Shall I send him home?"

He spoke sympathetically, but it was impossible not to see that he found food for mirth in the situation.

"Thank you." An unwilling, a rueful little smile twisted her lip. "I hope you know where his home is."

"Every one in Netherlands knows," briefly. "He is a notorious old soak."

As briefly as disgustedly did he pack H. J. off in the cab. "Just as I would stuff a rag doll into its box," thought Patty approvingly.



Patty

No mind-reader was required to interpret his glance as he turned from the empty cab-stand to his own full auto.

But she anticipated him:

"Thank you, no. I am expecting my friends' carriage every minute."

When he had chug-chugged quite out of sight, she asked the station-master the shortest way to the Wilcoxes.

"Sorry I could not send to meet you, Miss Elliott," said Mrs. Wilcox.

Patty mentally appraised her: home-made gown; gold spectacles; fat, fussy, forty, and doesn't care!

"Sorry I could not send to meet you, but Mr. Wilcox took the carriage to the Country Club."

"He wath going to play golf with Gramper," volunteered one of two tow-headed boys exactly alike.

"Father alwayth playth with Gramper," said the other.

"And Gramper alwayth beatth," added the first.

"These are two of your future charges, Miss Elliott. Seven years old. Marmaduke and Reginald, shake hands with Miss Elliott. And this is my little Gladys, five years old. Shake hands with Miss Elliott, Gladys. And this is my oldest daughter, Marie."

Marie, who looked about twenty, shook hands without prompting.

"You will read French and play accompaniments with her, but she is too old to be your pupil, aren't you, Marie? By the way, how old are you yourself, Miss Elliott? I stipulated for thirty. You don't look it," with a sharp glance over the gold spectacles.

She led the way up-stairs.

"I will show you your quarters in what we call the children's wing. The first on the right we call Gramper's room."

Patty trod softly past the closed door, listening for the sound of stertorous breathing.

"Oh, he is not there now. My father's house is nearly a mile off; that long, low white one you can just see from your window. This is the twins' room. Gramper likes them near him. Two little brass beds, you see," complacently. "That door over there is Marie's. This

large pleasant room between them is for you. I am sure you will like it. My little Gladys has a crib in the corner. That tall screen is to keep the light from her eyes when you sit up here evenings. The next is the day nursery. You have tea there with the children at six. Then you give Gladys her bath and put her to bed while we are at dinner. By eight the boys must be in bed. After that you are at liberty."

As in a vision Patty beheld herself "sitting by Gladys" evenings: herself trying to appear thirty in the eyes of the gold spectacles: herself regulating every hour of day and night by the watch in Mrs. Wilcox's belt. She felt sure that managing lady drove her father to drink and henpecked her husband.

She felt surer when, late in the afternoon, Mr. Wilcox returned from the Country Club. He was a smallish, oldish man with a despondent mustache.

"Your father never came, Flora," he complained to his wife, after limply shaking hands with the new governess. "He sent word that he was indisposed."

Indisposed! Patty took credit to herself for not smiling.

"Was Mrs. Lowry there?" inquired his wife. "Or Miss Northam?"

"Both of them," he sighed. "The Merry Widow said she was so disappointed not to see 'dear Gramper!' Yes, that's what she called him. I was to say," he mimicked clumsily an airy feminine manner, "the Club was a desert without him."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Wilcox. "She only goes there to meet him. It is positively disgraceful, Miss Elliott, the way women run after a wealthy widower. Minnie Lowry and Addie Northam are capable of coming to nurse him when they hear he is ill. It is too bad Marie and I have to be in town all day to-morrow. Let me see—Cook can make him a jelly and Julia—no, not Julia—James can take it over to him. Miss Elliott, you will kindly see to that."

"First turn to the right is Johnston's lane," cook had said.

All these old Long Island places have lanes winding up to them. So pretty, this one, through a fairy forest of blossom-

ing trees! Such an enchanting sprinkle of light and shade as you looked into it. Slim birch stems, silver white, standing together like young girls in party frocks. Ferns in clumps, as if the cleverest gardener had set them out. Ferns are the only plants that have cunning young ones, curly and downy and darling as kittens or ducklings.

And now a tempting cross-cut, by this foot-path, then over the stile—dear actual stile, like an English novel! Now across this rolling field. Now the house is not a hundred yards off. And now—Horror! cows! One, two—five coal black cows! Sinister color! How had she come so far from that precious stile without seeing them?

"Nonsense, Patty Elliott! You are not ready to faint because—idiot! Why, some women actually milk cows. Little children drive cows. O-O-Oh! They have seen me! They are watching me! Every last one has stopped browsing to stare. They keep turning to face me! Pshaw! Walk right on quietly and they won't notice. Oh, but they do! they do! They are terribly interested in me. Never mind. Walk right on. Don't run—mind you don't run, or they'll see you are afraid. Don't look back! Oh! oh! one is following! Don't run!"

How she reached it, how she got over it, who met her on the other side, she never knew. She had an indistinct recollection of assuring some one that she was all right; that the jelly was all right; that she hoped Mr. Johnston was all right. She was sitting in a wing-chair before a wide fire-place, fanning herself with her hydrangea hat. From an adjoining room came a light snapping sound, which she presently identified as the shuffling of cards.

Yes: H. J. certainly was a sport. Gramper, having recovered from his indisposition, was now gambling with his boon companions. And then a door behind her opened and a tall man in gray clothes came in.

Patty sprang up with the first words that occurred to her.

"I don't want to see Mr. Johnston, but I would like to learn if the jelly—Oh, is it you?" recognizing the automobilst of yesterday.

He bowed, his white teeth showing agreeably in his tanned face.

"Do I understand that you prefer not to see Mr. Johnston?"

"I saw quite enough of him yesterday," responding to his smile. "He sat next to me in the train, too."

"Johnston sat next to you in the train?"

He appeared utterly surprised.

"Yes. You did not know that I had had an encounter with him before the time you bundled him into the cab." She laughed at the remembrance. "Those wretched fragments he was offering me were actually flowers and candy sent me by—a friend. I left them behind when I fled from a seat near him."

"Oh, indeed."

He evidently took in that much.

"And did Mrs. Wilcox's jelly reach him safely?"

"Did—Mrs. Wilcox's—jelly—?"

He was dazed again.

Positively some folks require words of one syllable, with every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed! Patty turned sideways, so as to face him squarely, and beat off her sentences on the arm of her big chair.

"Mrs. Wilcox is Mr. Johnston's daughter." Even a transient guest ought to know that much about the man he was playing cards with. "I am Mrs. Wilcox's governess. Mrs. Wilcox heard last night that Mr. Johnston was *indisposed*." She underlined the word with a vivid recollection that this man had called him an "old soak." "Mrs. Wilcox made some jelly for her father. Mrs. Wilcox was obliged to go to town today. There was a slight domestic difficulty and I told the cook I would carry the jelly to the old gentleman. Is that clear?"

"Thank you," he said humbly, "I must appear unusually dense. Four of us were playing bridge when the housekeeper rushed in to say that a young lady had been frightened by the cattle in the west pasture. It seemed up to me to come and inquire," he hesitated, "Johnston being—"

"I understand," cried Patty, "and thank you. I am glad," she added, "that

no one but the housekeeper saw me run."

"She gave a graphic description of the way you came over the fence."

"Did she, indeed?"

Patty sat up very straight.

"But I am sure I should have done worse, incumbered with a mould of jelly and a flower hat."

"I quite believe that," said Patty emphatically. "And now," pinning on the hat, "I need detain you no longer from your game. If you would kindly show me how to get home without fighting wild beasts at Ephesus!—Oh!"

He had opened the room door directly into the sunshine of an informal old garden, wherein fruit trees familiarly approached the house. A gnarled apple-tree thrust its pink and white luxuriance of blossoms at them like a giant nosegay. And "Oh!" she cried again, at big grandmotherly snowballs and syringas, at generous purple lilac, at a yellow wealth of Forsythia, at immemorial box, in round thick tufts.

"And this delightful place," said Patty, when they parted at a gate sentinelled by two huge weeping willows, "belongs to that—that impossible person!"

Her companion only laughed.

"Reginald, this is your Sunday to take Gramper to church. My little sons, Miss Elliott, take turns in escorting their grandfather, and he appreciates the attention highly. Have you a clean handkerchief and a penny for the offering, Reggie?"

Mrs. Wilcox's Sunday bustling was sevenfold that of other mornings.

"I trust, Miss Elliott, it will be no deprivation for you not to accompany us to our worship. I prefer some one should stay at home while Gladys has her nap. Marie, set your hat straight. Come, Marmaduke! Come, father!"

Gladys still slept when the church party returned. Mrs. Wilcox puffed upstairs with a clouded brow, Julia, the gaunt, cross-eyed maid in her train.

"Dear me!" glancing at the bed. "Here it is dinner-time. I don't see what possessed Gramper to come home with us! He hates midday dinners, but here

he is, and the table set, and Julia so worried and all! I wonder Miss Elliott, if you would mind having your dinner up-stairs?"

"That's nice," when Patty indifferently acquiesced.

"And if you wish to attend afternoon service, go out the back way and you will see a short cut to church across the fields.

"Julia," turning sharply she nearly caught the maid grimacing at Patty, "what are you dawdling here for? I gave you the extra doilies."

Julia, when she brought up Patty's tray, spoke witheringly of her mistress' strategy.

"It's all on account of the childer's Gramper, miss," she explained, "an' the gran' gntleman he is intirely. Sorra, a young lady wud he see by her good lave. Dinner up-stairs and the back dure' to you, miss, an that cross with me, too," Julia bridled consciously. "I wonder she'll be after letting me wait on him at all!"

Whereat Patty laughed out.

The memory of Julia's simper kept her amused throughout the afternoon. She was in no haste to meet "the gran' gntleman" of the maid's admiration. Voices in the library told her that he was protracting his stay. At last the teabell obliged her to go down; if there was anything she despised it was a bell for meals—like a boarding-house!

"Miss Elliott, Mr. Johnston; my father and the children's grandfather."

She was shaking hands with the man who had unceremoniously shut an intoxicated Mr. Johnston into a cab; the man who had been playing bridge with an indisposed Mr. Johnston; the man who had lightly teased her on her enthusiasm for Mr. Johnston's garden; the man who—

Mrs. Wilcox's frown told Patty that a bow would have been sufficient from the governess. But what was she to do when a person put his hand out? And what was she to think? Mr. Wilcox, with his bald head and his stoop was obviously older than his stalwart father-in-law. And Marie? How could any one under forty be grandfather to a girl of twenty?



"This person is annoying you, is he not?"

Yet he was, and Mrs. Wilcox allowed no one to forget it.

"Marie, pass Grandpa the salt."
 "Marie, Grandpa has no butter."
 "Marie, Grandpa needs cream for his tea."

"Lemon, please, Flora," Mr. Johnston put in.

"Marie, don't give Grandpa salad. It's bad for rheumatism."

"I'll risk it, Flora," said her father.

He risked everything: crabs, cheese, mayonnaise, chocolate-cake. Poor Mr. Wilcox was apparently the only one who had to consider his digestion. "Gramper" was the one who kept up the conversation; kept it up lightly and brightly; made one forget that Mr. Wilcox was a bore and Mrs. Wilcox a boss.

He told one funny story about the village drunkard—"Old Hank Jones, Miss Elliott," addressing her pointedly; "his initials are the same as mine."

They both laughed, perhaps more than was necessary over the tale, and Mrs. Wilcox said austere:

"Do not make a jest of intemperance, father."

After tea little Marmaduke was bidden fetch yesterday's paper—the Wilcoxes disapproved of Sunday papers—and read to Grandpa.

"Thank you, my boy, I have read Saturday's paper."

"Then fetch the last book Grandpa gave you. Grandpa must hear how you have improved."

With a lounging chair and leave to smoke "Gramper" resigned himself to the "Just-So Stories." Patty would not have deemed it possible to eliminate all humor from the intercourse of Mr. Henry Albert Blivvens with the Whale. But it was. At the end of the tale Mr. Johnston opened his eyes to remark dryly that Miss Elliott was making quite an elocutionist of Duke.

"So far, I have been instructor," Mrs. Wilcox hastened to appropriate the doubtful compliment. "And now, Miss Elliott, will you kindly take the children to bed. Say 'Good-night' to Gramper," she added briskly.

And "Gramper" proved that he had listened to the reading by softly quoting:

"A person of infinite-resource-and-sagacity."

His grave eyes met Patty's and she laughed all the way up-stairs.

II

"But, Julia, you should have told Mrs. Lowry that all the family was out."

"I did, miss, an' she says, 'Please take my card to Miss Elliott?'"

Reluctantly Patty buttoned herself into a fresh linen frock, and with a passing malediction on the fashion of buttoning in the back ran down-stairs to meet a high-colored, high-nosed woman with a dashing hat upon her elaborately puffed hair.

"My dear Miss Elliott," putting out a tight white kid paw, "I am an old acquaintance of your cousin, Mrs. Norris, and an older one of Mrs. Purdy, Jefferson's mother. I have spent several summers with her in Rockville, so you see I have heard much of you, my dear. Don't blush. A small country town is sure to discuss the matrimonial plans of its only millionaire."

"It may discuss them all it pleases, but there is no reason why it need discuss me," said Patty, with lofty displeasure.

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed her visitor meaningly.

But she hastened to change the subject. There was no malice under the blonde puffs.

"So fortunate to find you in. I understand Mrs. Wilcox and the children are spending the day at Mr. Johnston's. Such a darling house of the old Long Island type, with hand-made shingles and shutters, and set in what the English call 'matured grounds;' fine lawn, enormous trees and box—well, you know how long it takes to grow any box worth mentioning. And a hedge of crimson Rambler around the kitchen-garden with a simply incredible amount of roses. Looks like a military show-case on opening day!"

"I have seen Mr. Johnston's house from my window," Patty hastened to add, not altogether truthfully, "and it looks most attractive."

"Ah, but you should see the inside!

Two hundred years old, and Howard Johnston has had the sense to make few changes. He added some baths and verandas, but he still uses the ancient fireplace and lights his white paneled rooms with loads of candles. The candelabra were his several-times-great-grandfather's. The old boy's portrait hangs in the hall with bullet-holes through it made by British soldiers. What a pity he did not invite you."

"He did," began Patty thoughtlessly, "but—"

She stopped, confused by Mrs. Lowry's laughter.

"But—Flora Wilcox thought this a good opportunity for you to—er—brush up on, let us say, trigonometry, for Reggie and Dukie."

"She thought it would be an undisturbed day for me to lay out a course of French reading for Marie," corrected the governess gravely.

"That's what I said," agreed the blithe visitor, and she giggled with infectious enjoyment. "You see, I know my Flora Wilcox. She brooks no sister near the throne who might be capable of designs upon 'Gramper.' Oh yes, you are capable of designs. With your figure and your lovely color"—the color deepened—"I should judge you an expert designer. For that matter, in Flora Wilcox's eyes, any woman under fifty is a qualified member of our local Arts and Crafts Society, whose sole object is to inveigle her father into a second marriage. There is the Artful Louise Andrews—she once spread a report of their engagement; and the Crafty Adela Northam, who gives bridge-dinners—he plays like a breeze and she doesn't ask the Wilcoxes:—there is the 'Merry Widow,' that's me. And we hereby elect you Designer in Chief, Miss Elliott."

"Too much honor," laughed Patty.

It was useless to show annoyance with this feather-brain.

"Dimples, too! Oh, *poor* Flora Wilcox! You must give her sleepless nights. I shall have to tell her about Jefferson Purdy and relieve her mind."

At this Patty jumped from her seat.

"Mrs. Lowry!"

"There! there! rely," airily, "upon my justly famed discretion. But isn't

Mrs. Wilcox the limit? At present she is worried to death because her father has a pretty stenographer. That girl will get the sack in a week. Out here some of the family always stands guard over him. Once a week he has to dine with them and once a week they have to dine with him. She made her husband take up golf, and Howard Johnston, who is our Club champion, meekly does thirty-six holes with him. If Pa can't go, Reggie or Dukie is always on hand to caddy for 'Gramper.' Then she utilizes Marie. 'Gramper' was wheedled into teaching bridge to his step-daughter."

"His step-granddaughter?"

"Why, yes. Didn't you know that Mr. Wilcox was a widower with one child? Goodness! Why Marie is nearly twenty, and although Flora married young—all the Johnstons do—still—"

There was no stopping the flood. Patty was obliged to learn that Howard Johnston was forty-six and looked ten years younger, while his daughter was twenty-five and looked ten years older; also much about the first Mrs. Johnston—there would surely be a second—and the first Mrs. Wilcox. Finally, what did Miss Elliott think of Mr. Johnston?

"I think he has a good tailor," Miss Elliott observed demurely.

"Good tailor! I should say he has! And good figure, too. I am crazy about him. But then, I never care for men under forty. Callow youths and pink teas for *débutantes*, I say. Talking of tea, I suppose," discontentedly, "I can't have any here. Flora Wilcox doesn't believe in tea except on formal occasions. I know what I'll do," brightening, "I'll follow her; I'll say I didn't want to miss my visit with her. Mr. Johnston will give us tea in a dear old grape-arbor with a brick floor. He hasn't spoiled his place with any silly pergola. We'll have cream like yellow custard, and very likely some of his prize strawberries, and his Scotch housekeeper makes delicious shortbread. Come on! It will be fun to see Flora Wilcox's face when we drive in."

Patty shook her head.

"I wouldn't dare after what you tell me. We might get 'Gramper' into trouble. Does he never rebel?"

"Oh, it is his way to take everything as a joke. And sometimes I really believe," she tapped her teeth thoughtfully with her parasol—the handle was a carved and colored cockatoo, and Patty could not help seeing a comical likeness between the bird and the beaky sleek head on one side—"I really believe he likes it."

"Likes always being hedged in?" Patty asked of the visitor scornfully.

"You see," nodding shrewdly, "it saves him a lot of trouble. And as for hedges, Howard Johnston is man enough to leap any hedge when he chooses. Well, good-by, if you wont come along."

Every afternoon it was Miss Elliott's duty to take Gladys, Reginald, and Marmaduke for "an instructive country ramble."

Every afternoon on their return Mrs. Wilcox inquired:

"Did Gramper happen to meet you?"

And Patty assured her, "No, Mrs. Wilcox, he did not."

"Because," the anxious matron would pursue, "he comes out on the 3:30 in summer, and he often walks from the station. Gramper is so fond of Gladys and the twins."

Two weeks of this got upon Patty's nerves.

One day, without waiting for the usual question, she answered and said:

"No, Mrs. Wilcox, he did not." But to herself she vindictively added, "But he shall!"

On the morrow, purposely and of malice aforethought, with a becoming frock on and her little band about her,

Patty intercepted Mr. Johnston upon his homeward way. He was swinging easily along the country road, a *débonnaire*, distinguished figure, with his loose tweeds, his stick, and his eyeglass. Promptly he joined them. A word from him sent the children whooping ahead down the road to the shore, where they dug ecstatically in the sand, while he and Patty chatted, with interludes devoted to seaweed and fiddler-crabs.

And it happened that Mrs. Wilcox omitted her customary question on their return.

"I must have frightened her out of it," Patty decided.

Flushed with triumph, she nodded at her reflection in her mirror. Certainly she was going to walk with "Gramper" and she was going to talk with "Gramper" as much as she chose. He was the only live and human and amusing person in the place. Mrs. Wilcox's precautions were nothing less than insulting!

In the days that followed "Gramper" became a fea-

ture of the instructive country rambles: their most instructive feature. Patty had never met any one who so knew and loved all the small living and growing things of the woods. She had formed a habit of considering such interests distinctively feminine, to be suppressed in—say Jefferson's society. Here was a man who got something out of the country besides sport. "H. J. is a good deal of a sport" returned to memory and roused a smile.

Another recollected saying brought a tinge of mischief into the smile: "Gramper is so fond of Gladys and the twins."



Stood a large and angry woman

For Gladys and the twins never went to afternoon service at St. Mark's-in-the-fields, where their grandfather was becoming a regular attendant.

From her neighboring pew Mrs. Lowry winked and whispered to the governess. She was to give Flora Wilcox a scare and then tell her about Jefferson Purdy; she was to—

It is odiously vulgar to whisper in church!

Steady gray rain veiled the casements. Outside, vines spread a pattern, lovelier than any stained glass, across the small panes, darkening the room still further. Inside firelight flickered on the low ceiling, brass and irons shone gayly, children squatted on the hearth watching white kernels dance in their wire box; near by Patty and her host sat and chatted like the good friends they had become.

A sudden storm had caught her and her charges near the Johnston place and its owner made them come in, promising to send them home in his auto as soon as the rain ceased. His housekeeper had taken off their dripping hats, brought them tea before the living-room fire, and even produced a corn popper for the children's entertainment. It was a cheery wintry hearth-and-home hour, Patty said, dropped into early June.

She cast an approving glance around. She remembered the quaint shepherdess-and-flock wall-paper; she liked the glimmer of pewter against it; she adored rush-bottomed chairs. Jefferson Purdy must buy her just such a dear old fashioned place, and she would have tea, rainy afternoons, on an agate-table before a driftwood fire. She pictured Jefferson at the other side of the table; instead of this dark head with a sort of little whirlpool touched with silver, that wanted to curl on the temple, she imaged opposite, Jefferson's lank hair brushed across his high forehead in the curve she disliked. The dark head turned from the fire and the man looked at her. She could not imagine Jefferson Purdy looking at her like that. Oh, she hoped she had not hurt him! She had not meant to hurt him.

He smiled lazily. The momentary expression vanished.

"You like my house?"

"I love it."

"Then take it, will you?"

"How like a Spanish cavalier!" said Patty lightly. "What is it they say—*la casa e suya*."

"I mean it. Take my house. Make a home of it. Be my wife, Patty."

He spoke low and calmly, leaning toward her over the teacups.

"You honor me greatly, Mr. Johnston, but—before I came here—I—"

The door opened noisily. On the threshold stood a large and wet and angry woman, laden with umbrellas, cloaks, and coats that increased her own not inconsiderable bulk. A voice of wrath, the voice of Mrs. Wilcox, issued from this mountain of dry-goods.

"Well! I must say!"

And evidently for the moment she could say nothing. Literally speechless with rage, she flung her burden to the floor.

"Marmaduke!" she called, in choked tones, "come here this instant and put on your mackintosh."

"Reginald!" She strode across the room and dashed the corn-popper from his hand. "Yours is there, too. You are coming home with me at once."

"Gladys!" She jerked the child up and sat her down hard in the nearest chair. "Let mother put your rubbers on."

Kneeling in front of the little girl she turned an oblique glare upon the two at the tea-table.

"And you with your hat off, Miss Elliott! Making yourself at home in a man's house! If this is your idea of propriety, the sooner we part the better."

"We part at once!" Patty sprang up.

"Spending hours alone with him! No one knows how long nor how often!"

"Marmaduke, stop gathering up that stuff."

Marmaduke dropped a handful of popcorn as if it burned him.

"Gladys, hold your foot still. Oh, I have known of others, but this," she rammed the rubber home with a smart blow on the child's sole.

"Ouch!" said Gladys.

"Gladys, stop your noise. This is absolutely the most barefaced! When I interrupted you—"

"When you interrupted us with inexcusable rudeness," Howard Johnston's pleasant voice had an edge to it that was new to his daughter, "I was trying to persuade Miss Elliott to marry me. Kindly allow me to go on." He, too, had risen and was intercepting the girl's hasty movement toward the door.

"Father!" gasped Mrs. Wilcox, when she got her breath, "the children—"

"Let them repeat what they like," resolutely, "Patty, will you have me?"

It was an absurd proposal. Mrs. Wilcox sat back upon her heels and glared at the speaker. Gladys slipped from her chair and shuffled toward him, with one rubber on. Marmaduke and Reginald ceased struggling into their coats and closed in upon him, still earnestly chewing popcorn.

Patty dumbly shook her head. If she had spoken she would have laughed till she cried.

"Do you love—are you engaged to some one else?"

"N-not exactly. But I expect—he expects—my family expects—"

She could not meet his gaze, but if she turned to the right Mrs. Wilcox gaped at her; if she turned to the left six childish orbs were riveted upon her, so she looked down.

"It does not matter what any one expects so long as you do not love—Patty, I know I could make you very happy. Don't you know it, too? Can't you feel it?"

The eyes still ringed her round.

"It's—it's Jefferson Purdy," she blurted out desperately.

"The flour-king's son," murmured Mrs. Wilcox in a tone of awe.

Her father threw a short laugh in her direction.

"You thought I was a great match, eh, Flora?"

Patty found herself admiring his bearing. It struck her with a pang that she was following Mrs. Lowry's plan; she was rejecting him before his daughter's eyes. Before his grandchildren's eyes! The tears came into her own.

"Oh, Mr. Johnston," impulsively, "I don't care for his money!"

"No, my dear," kindly.

He walked to the fireplace, where he

stood with his back to them all. To Patty the very droop of his shoulders looked unhappy. She could not *bear* him to be unhappy.

"No," gloomily poking the logs, "it is because he is young and good looking and you like him better than me."

There was a moment of silence and then:

"*Gramper* is good-looking!" Gladys fell upon him and clasped him around the legs in a spasm of affection that nearly threw its object into the fire. "*Isn't* Gramper good-looking? Isn't he, Miss Elliott?"

"Y-yes, oh yes!" Patty hastily assured her.

"Yeth, Gramper'th good-looking," lisped Reginald, fired by his sister's championship.

"Sure he is!" chimed in Marmaduke. "An' they aint nobody we like better. Nobody 'tall," he challenged. "Is they, Miss Elliott?"

"N-no. No, indeed!" sobbed Patty, and rejoiced that a clash of fire-irons drowned her voice.

"What you cryin' for?" The three children turned their attention to her.

"I am crying because—because—Oh, my goodness, what a family!"

At this moment, fortunately for her lost equilibrium, some one knocked.

"The rain has stopped and I have brought the car around, sir," said the well trained chauffer, oblivious to every one but his employer.

When the express to New York made its first stop Howard Johnston came through the train.

"I have a drawing-room for you," he informed Miss Elliott, walking away with her bag and umbrella, so that she was obliged to follow. And when they were seated in comparative privacy: "Was it very bad last night?"

"Pretty bad," she acknowledged, and noted, not for the first time, that no one else ever offered her this precise blend of sympathy and humor.

"What did you do?"

"Got to my room as soon as possible, wrote a letter," she glanced at an envelope she held, "packed my trunk, and went to bed."



She heard a clicking sound—the dealing of cards

"And now you are going to your cousin's house?"

"Yes."

"And how soon do you expect to marry Mr. Purdy?"

"Really, Mr. Johnston!"

Her glance ought to have annihilated him.

"It could be to-morrow," he mused, "and sail for Europe the day after. That is what I should do in his place."

Patty arose with dignity and began to gather up her belongings.

"Wait just a little," he begged. "Give

me till we reach the city, wont you?"

Patty sat down again.

He smiled and his smile irritated her.

"Then you must not talk about—Jefferson."

"I don't want to," he declared.

A silence ensued, during which Patty strove to put order into thoughts hopelessly confused since yesterday. And then:

"Does forty-six appear such an immense age to you?"

"It is nearly fifty," venomously.

She wanted to sting.

"Call it 'fifty.' Call it anything you please," he said, supremely indifferent. "It is the right age for you, you foolish girl."

His audacity left her speechless.

"You admitted that you did not love—that other man—nor care for his money. Now, since I am so good-looking," with an odd, half-sheepish, half-rallying smile, "and since you like nobody better—"

"You know I was only humoring your grandchildren!" indignantly.

"They are going to be your grandchildren," he declared presumptuously. "And Flora, poor cross Flora," he laughed out, "will be your daughter. Does the prospect alarm you?"

"It doesn't alarm me, because it isn't a prospect," icily.

"No, it isn't prospective. It is immediate. I tell you, it can be done to-morrow. Listen, darling," when she would have broken in, "you know you like me. You know you can trust yourself to me.

He—that other man, I understand is thirty, but," his arm crept around her, "do you suppose he can love you as I do?"

Patty sat stiffly, half-embraced.

"You never said that before," she whispered with her head turned away.

"That I love you? Why, I kept saying it all yesterday afternoon—before an attentive audience!"

"No. You asked me if I liked your house. And if I would make it a home—"

"Little goose!"

She was held close to him now and her face covered with kisses. "And you were mean enough not to let me know!"

"I didn't know myself—then."

"Tear up that letter to Purdy."

He pointed to the envelope in her hand.

She turned it meditatively.

"I don't have to. I wrote it last night to say that I had decided I could not be his wife."

The Last Buffalo

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

Author of "Love of Woman," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL CRAWFORD

STANDING upon the little square front porch of the adobe ranch-house, the girl watched her father as, shaggy, large-shouldered, powerful, he came trudging from the fence where he had loosely tethered his saddled horse. Her color was still high. She was a pretty girl—slim, straight from much horse-back riding, with black hair and slatey eyes, full red lips, and the splendid glowing complexion of the Western constant sun and thin air.

The grizzled old man passed her by, to enter the house. Presently, having stumped about within, he emerged.

"I mean it," he paused beside her to

say. "Never any good come of such marryin', an' never will. If you're bound to marry, take Tom—he's a man, an' I sha'n't say a word ag'in' it. But this whippersnapper! What do you know about him, anyhow? 'D ruther you'd marry a Mexican than a lunger; an' he's goin' back to the states. *You* don't want to live in the states, pettie!"

"The states?" was to "Old Bill" Diamond the living, poignant term as of yore—spoken by pioneers sometimes with wistfulness, sometimes with disdain. With old Bill it was entirely the latter. And he took not into consideration the fact that "the states" now lay west as

well as east, embracing alike New York and California. Time had outgrown old Bill, while he clung stubbornly to the past.

"I haven't married him yet, have I?" retorted the girl, pertly.

"Well, you're letting him be sweet on yuh. You're doin' a whole lot of foolin' with him. You'd better quit it."

"He's going to-day, or to-morrow," defended the girl.

"He can't go too soon. He come uninvited. We don't keep no hospital here."

"But he's worked for his board, hasn't he?" she rebuked.

"Humph!" He snorted through his bushy gray beard. "Fed the chickens some, mebbe."

He hesitated, frowning off toward the range, which rose bluish and wonderful, enwrapped in the dreamy New Mexican atmosphere, on the north. From beneath his overhanging brows he shot a sharp side-glance at the girl. His leathery, hairy, wrinkled face softened.

"I've alluz been good to you, honey, hain't I?"

"Yes, daddy."

He shuffled awkwardly, in his rusty boots.

"Jes' as if you'd really been born to me. Well then, you listen to what I say. I've lived longer 'n you have, an' I've had to know a man when I see one, an' this lunger feller aint a man for you. If you want a man, take Tom. Sh' think, tho'," he muttered, over his shoulder, half querulously, as, his one spur jingling, he tramped on, down the steps and across to his horse, "with me 'round you'd have enough man to suit ye for a while."



He perched himself upon the kitchen-table

He lifted the bridle-reins from the post, slapped the horse to make him stand aside, and clambered heavily into the saddle. At seventy years, fifty of them being a rugged half-century of the plains-and-mountains West, old Bill was not the springy horseman that once he might have been; but finally in the saddle he could stick with the best.

"I may be over to the Mathewses when you come back," called the girl, as by a sudden impulse.

"All right. Good-by," he responded gruffly, without looking, as he pricked with his spur and moved off up the road.

"Good-by, daddy."

She followed him with her eyes, as he trotted away, bound for town. Her lips relaxed tenderly. She was proud of her father—father in blood as in spirit he seemed to her; proud of him for the veteran that he was, who had freighted over the Santa Fé Trail, who had campaigned with Kit Carson, who had fought the Apache, the Ute, and the Navajo; and who, having made some history, now had settled down, of the last of the old régime, upon the little ranch—all of this world's goods that remained to him after more than fifty years of frontier life, but valuable to him because it at least smacked of the free and the open.

And she was as fond of him as she was proud; fond of him for that very cantankerousness which had rendered him almost notorious. Beneath the cantankerousness beat a kind heart. She knew it; so did everybody who took pains to find out. He was pronounced by the scientific man who had stayed with them over night to be like one of those curious stones which, rough outside, in its center contains some drops of sweet water. But he reminded *her* of an old buffalo—like the surly, rumbling bull she had seen stalking across the zoo in the Denver park.

Not all these thoughts passed through the girl's head, now; there was only the consciousness which such thoughts, by reiteration, had left. She caught the note of a limpid whistle, from beyond the sheds; and with a flush afresh deepening in her cheeks she quickly turned and went within.

The whistle drew nearer. A young man, stocky, bareheaded, in ragged blue overalls and outing shirt, rounded the corner of the rude shack of adobe and poles and thatch which served in case of stress as shelter for vehicles and stock alike, and vaulting the equally rude fence partitioning off the premises there, approached the house. He was whistling "Dearie"—a tune yet alien to rural New Mexico—and the fact that he was bare-headed implied that he, too, was an alien. It also suggested something else: the trait of the health-seeker. And while the rough shaven, full countenance was tanned and ruddy and

wholesome, his rather flat chest and his very exuberance of color bore out that trait. The features were genial; only the black eyes, too bold, moreover, were set too close together.

"Coo-ee?" he signaled, inquiringly, at the porch steps.

He entered.

The girl was in the kitchen, ostentatiously delving into the cupboard. She did not look.

"Hello!" he said, quizzically, standing in the doorway through from the living-room.

"Hello!" she answered.

The vivid tint of her cheeks heightened and spread, until beneath the tendrils clustered roguishly upon the nape of her slim neck the skin was crimson.

"Want any help?" he asked.

He stood close beside her. Her hands trembled as she smoothed the paper that she was laying upon a shelf.

"No, thank you," she replied, evenly.

His arm slipped about her waist, and tightened.

"Aren't mad, are you?" he suggested, jocularly.

His manner had a familiarity beyond the mere freedom of the action.

She did not resist the arm. Instead, while with the one hand she continued her pretense of arranging the shelf, with the other she sought and found his hand at her belt. Her clasp was honest and boyish. She was taller than he.

With a final pressure he released her, and perched himself negligently upon the edge of the kitchen-table.

"Bill gone?" He referred to her father.

"Yes. He went to town, you know." She did not resent his flippancy.

"Suppose he'll chew the rag with Souers at the store, till night; fighting New Mex's 'battles o'er.' Tom's gone, too, hasn't he?"

"He rode clear to the other side of the *mesa*, to hunt for old Boss. You know he was speaking of it at breakfast. Boss must have a calf over there somewhere."

"Well, hope he finds her, and she hooks him into the middle of next week," remarked the young man, amiably. "Come here, girlie."

She obediently shut the cupboard, and going to him stood before him. He took both her hands, and drew her nearer.

"Do you love me?" he queried, baldly. She flushed.

"You mustn't ask such things," she faltered.

"Then kiss me," he ordered.

She gave him her lips, shyly, yet frankly, kissing him back.

"Wow!" he said. "That's the girl! Once again, now—there. And you're coming with me, aren't you?"

"I—don't—know."

She looked aside, flaming, palpitant, desirous but uncertain; struggling piteously with her judgment.

"What!" he reproached. "But you said you would. And I'm going this afternoon."

Startled, wide-eyed she looked full upon him.

"This afternoon? I thought—to-morrow." She stammered, appealingly.

"This afternoon, sure thing. Right away." He swung her hands with his—parting them and bringing them together. "I might as well. I'm sick of the whole blooming country—except you. I want to get back to little old Pittsburgh, and see a real live town again. I want to *smell* it, savvy? I want to be where there's something *doing*. Lord! No more 'Wild West' for this boy. He'd have hung his cast-off overalls on the fence long ago if it hadn't been for you."

"But I can't go so soon," she gasped, feebly.

"Why not? Now's our chance. Old man gone; Tom the Piper's Son gone; we'll be gone. See? What's to hinder, girlie?" His tone grew injured.

"But—I hadn't thought—just yet," she faltered.

"Why not 'just yet?' We'll never have a better chance."

He gently struck her hands, still in his, together, and lifting them kissed them.

"Is it Tom?" he demanded, jealously.

"Tom!" She bridled. "But daddy—"

"Aw, we'll send 'daddy' back a pound of tobacco. That will comfort him."

"I did tell him I might go over to the Matthews ranch," she murmured,

doubtfully, the inconsistency of her a confession.

"Good enough! He'll think you're there, then."

"I could leave a note, too—I often stay there all night, you know?"

The rising inflection invited further persuasion.

"Don't you *want* to come with me, girlie?"

With face half averted she let him swing her hands.

"Kind of."

"Only 'kind of,' eh? Well, I'm going anyway."

He dropped her hands, significantly, even petulantly.

"But daddy—he'll miss me," she appealed.

"Didn't I tell you we'd send old Bill a sack of tobacco? That's enough for him. I think it's a shame for him to keep a girl like you here at the ragged edge of nowhere! You don't want to be a rancher's wife! First thing you know you'll be marrying a Mexican and settling down to a 'dobe shack and beans and goats' milk and—a family. Wouldn't you like to see a city?"

"I've been in Denver," she defended, again doubtfully.

"Once! And what's Denver! Why, an hour in New York is worth a whole year of Denver! Once you get in 'the states,' as old Bill calls it, you'll wonder why New Mexico ever exists. Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, New York, Boston—that's where *white* people live, girlie! We'll see 'em all, too."

"Will we?" she faltered, gazing upon him, wavering between smile and tear. She was so helpless before him.

"You bet! That will be better than sage-brush and sand and horned toads and 'no savvy.' We'll have the time of your life. And you can write old Bill all about it, and he can sit here in his wigwam and smoke his pipe and read your reports from 'the states.'"

"And I can come and see him?"

"Y-yes—but you can come alone. Bill and I don't jibe."

"You will, tho', when I'm married to you. Daddy's very generous," she asserted, proudly.

"Liable to have us arrested for 'hoss'



"Oh, Arthur! It's a buffalo!"

stealing, just the same, if he catches us."

The sneer in his tone stung her—but to their own defense rather than to her father's. She answered indignantly.

"But they're *my* horses. I raised Bonny and Tom gave me Flip."

"And you gave Tom the bounce, eh?" he indulged.

He abruptly arose and kissed her.

"What'll we do? Make over the hills for the railroad at Piñon?"

He suddenly was relying upon her, thus shifting the responsibility.

"Do you know the trail?"

"I *think* so," she said.

"Humph!"

He checked the disparaging comment now upon his lips.

"Oh, well," he proceeded, "we'll cut across all right; and by the time old Bill and Tom-tom are looking south we'll be on the other side of north and heading for Denver. Just watch me shed these overalls first, tho'. I'll leave them for old Bill to supply the next sucker with who comes into this blooming hole."

The concluding remark was ungracious in the extreme. The girl compressed her lips, and said nothing. It seemed to her that she ought to make allowances.

When he had left she moved aimlessly through the rooms. She was not to take much. *He* would buy her everything, later. But there were a few little trinkets of a personal nature, and a few little feminine necessities. 'Twas to be an all night trip across the range, by the ancient Indian trail, abandoned many years, over which the Utes and the Arapahoes were wont to ascend upon the Pueblos.

She scribbled a note, and laid it upon the kitchen-table.

Going to ride a ways with Mr. Jubelson. Will stay at Matthews maybe over night.

But she wrote another note, which she pinned inside the sleeve of her father's flannel night-gown.

It's all right about me. Don't you and Tom worry.

And she pressed her cheek for an

instant against the hanging folds of the grotesque red robe.

"Coo-ee?"

The call sounded.

"All saddled!" announced the young man, entering. "Ready? Come ahead. Got much?"

He had discarded his overalls; now he wore a slouched drab felt hat, leather banded, a canteen slung over his shoulder, and a six-shooter belted about his waist.

"Just what's in this roll. I'll put it inside my slicker, behind the saddle. And here's some sandwiches."

"Good," he commended. "I've got what I have on, and the pair of blankets. That's all I want out of this blasted country."

"Except me?" she hinted, a certain wistfulness in her voice.

"Sure; except you, girlie," he corroborated, readily. "Come on," he repeated. "Let's get a move on us."

Their course led by a cow-trail diagonally through the sage, pointing for the mountains. The horses naturally fell into single file: the girl before, erect, cross-saddle, taking the canter easily; the young man less erect, less easy, now and then scowling as his mount, stepping short to avoid a root, jolted him. More and more would he have impressed the unbiased observer as self-centered, irritable, intolerant of the disagreeable, domineering—one who had been spoilt by his malady.

The brush was threaded by innumerable tracks of winding, browsing sheep. From afar floated the tinkle of a bell-wether.

"If we meet anybody, they wont know," asserted the young man, bluffly. "Who's that ahead—the herder?"

"It's Manuel Gonzales. He's part owner, too."

"Oh, heck!" muttered the young man.

Manuel, plodding amidst the sage, at one side, looked as they passed.

"*Bueno*, Manuel," called the girl cheerily.

He flashed his white teeth.

"*Bueno*, *bueno*, *señorita*," he replied.

"*Adiós*, Manuel. *Vamós*, *por—fun!*" called the young man.

Manuel nodded.

"Was that right? It's all the Mex. I know," asked the young man of the girl, as they ambled on. "And I'll forget that as soon as I can," he added, contemptuously.

"Manuel is a nice Mexican," she answered, indirectly. "He is so proud of his sheep, too."

"Do you think he caught on—to anything?" questioned her companion, with insistent fear.

"Why, no. Anyway, he's taking his sheep over to the Osier, now. He wont be near the ranch, by night. He may not be near for a week."

They trotted along.

"Let's go slow for a minute," spoke the young man, grunting in complaint. "This horse has a beastly hard trot."

The girl drew rein.

"Flip is supposed to have a very easy trot," she corrected, mildly.

She turned out of the trail, and halting, faced backward in the saddle. The color in her cheeks was rich from the exercise. Her eyes of limpid, deep gray roved gradually, with quickly increasing moisture, over the landscape behind.

"What's the matter?" he asked sharply.

"I want to look."

Restively he began to adjust the roll of blankets at the cantle of his saddle.

They were upon a little rise. The sun was in the third quarter, and bright, burning, was casting the shadows eastward. Five miles distant lay the ranch. The girl's eyes, fastened upon it, grew misty. She seemed oblivious of her companion. The adobe house, the fences, the outbuildings, the green garden-patch which she had planted and attended, the yellow road—almost the chickens and the flowers, showed clean cut in the crystal air, their minor imperfections slurred. Nobody was moving along the road; nobody was apparent in the whole world. Even Manuel had vanished. 'Twas the hour betwixt and between; too early for evening homegoings; too late for town-goings; over the sun-drenched New Mexican land stretched the flawless New Mexican sky, spotted by not so much as a circling hawk. The world might have been waiting to be populated; and all was fair.

"Come on. Not homesick already, are you?" prompted the man, irritably.

"N-no," she responded. "I was looking at the ranch."

"It's all there, I guess," he said. "I didn't take any more of it than I had to."

"I'll come back to it—sometimes, wont I?" she quavered.

"You wont want to, when you've seen anything else," he sneered.

"I will! Oh, I will!" she returned, breathlessly. "New Mexico is home. I love it. I—" She paused, and laughed with a little catch in her voice. "I love even the tarantulas."

"And the rattlesnakes and the centipedes, I suppose. I don't. It's the last place on earth. So is all the West, thank you."

He kicked his horse in the ribs. "Come on," he reiterated.

"If old Bill gets home sober he's liable to give us the chase of our lives."

"You never saw my father drunk—and you never *heard* of him being drunk, either!" she retorted, suddenly flushing.

"All right. I apologize."

"He's the best daddy that ever was!"

"Sure—if he was your daddy. Never met a choicer gent. He ought to be in 'the states'—on exhibition."

They had lost the trail. It had grown fainter and fainter, for, as said, it was very old and long unused save by an occasional moccasined Pueblo; so that finally, evidently having followed a false lead, they had diverged beyond remedy. But somewhere lay the pass; and in hope of finding a valley that by means of a friendly guiding stream should bring them to it, they were following around the flank of the mountain. Little swale succeeded little swale, but they never came out.

The flank was rough, with piñon, scrub-oak, and cedar, and with great granite ledges up-jutting. For all: the losing of the trail, the roughness of the way, even the choice of route north instead of south, the man blamed the girl.

Afoot, the bridle-reins in his hand, panting he stopped short, and crossly called to her, ahead:

"I'm all in. Let's camp. What's the

use of knocking around in this way!"

"Can't you come on up here," she answered. "It's a better place, I think."

Grumbling, dragging his horse he climbed the few rods necessary.

"Coo-ee!" she directed.

He joined her, where by a ledge she stood, lips apart from the exercise, cheeks a clear crimson, a gauntleted hand upon the neck of Bonny.

"I can't find any water," she said, "but this is a good spot to camp. The rock will keep the wind off, and we can build a fire against it."

He grunted, and threw himself upon the turf, soft with the dried cedar sprinkled from the trees about.

"Let's eat," he proposed.

"Before unsaddling?"

She had the Westerner's intuitive mindfulness of the horse that carries him.

"Unsaddle, your grandmother!" he

scoffed. "I'm sure hungry—" And his added: "Whether you are or not" was emphasis superfluous.

"Well," she submitted. "Poor Bonny!" and she patted her horse's neck. She looped the bridle-reins over a shrub. "They'll stand," she said, "but they ought to be unsaddled." She untied the slicker from her cantele, and extracted therefrom the package of lunch. "Poor daddy, too!" she continued. "I expect he's getting his own supper, now; unless Tom's back."

"I expect he is, or else eating it with his knife," vouchsafed her companion, dryly. "Pah!" He greedily tilted his canteen. "Want a drink?" he asked, extending it.

"No, thank you. Not now."

She spoke evenly, but a spot of burning scarlet centered each cheek.

"Better; it may be all gone next time," he advised.



She faced him indignantly

Nevertheless, screwing on the cap, he laid the canteen upon the ground beside him.

They ate their supper. The sun sank, and the last tenuous shadows of the slope about them faded and merged with the brief twilight.

"Now we'll unsaddle," suggested the girl, sprightly, springing up. "Bonny and Flip will have to go hungry and thirsty. Of course, there's *some* grass. We must picket them to a tree, and not very long, either, or they'll get all tangled."

With a groan of distaste the man slowly stood. He irritably jerked at his saddle-girths.

"But, you know, we expected to spend one night out," she reproved.

"We didn't expect to lose the trail," he snapped; and, continuing: "I'll never trust to a girl again, that's sure. We might have gone south to Santa Fé, easier; and we'd have been better off even if we were caught."

The horses were unsaddled and picketed short. The two army blankets were taken from the man's saddle.

"Did you bring matches?" he demanded, sharply.

"Why—no. Didn't you?"

"Certainly not, I left that to you. You were preparing the lunch. This is a pretty note, I must say!"

"Oh, Arthur!" she deplored. "And haven't you any—not one?" She rallied. "But it won't be very cold. The rock is warm—from the sun. And we have my slicker, and your blankets."

"It may not hurt *you* to take cold, but it's a rather serious matter with me," he growled.

They sat silent a minute. The dusk rapidly deepened. A coyote yapped in the distance.

"Br-r-r!" shuddered the man. "All we can do is to turn in, then, I suppose."

"I'm so sorry I forgot, dear," pleaded the girl, timidly reaching and slipping a hand into his.

The mystery of night and the vast open; the sense of a being, and that a woman, defenseless against she knew not what, and dependent upon only another being, enfolded her, vaguely stirred her.

Down on the plain it must be darker, she knew. Her father would be going to bed. Perhaps he was finding the note inside his sleeve. Perhaps he and Tom were talking about it.

"Please, Arthur," she pleaded.

His hand consented to close over hers.

"Oh, it was both our faults, I reckon," he conceded, grudgingly. "How shall we divide—you take the blankets and I the slicker, or what?"

"You take the blankets," she insisted, "and I'll wear the slicker. It's really fine and warm, you know; and I can use the saddle-blankets, too, if I need them."

The coyotes barked, the horses sighed, the wind souged through the cedars, the air waxed frosty. Half-sitting against the granite, invested with the yellow slicker, over her shoulders the saddle-blankets, the girl fitfully dozed, to awaken shivering. Rolled in the two army blankets the young man snored.

With the morning he arose grumbling, stiff, red-eyed; but the freshness of the dawn seemed to enter into her. They ate a scanty breakfast, and saddled.

"Let's try it this direction," the girl suggested. "I think we must be over too far."

And she turned to the right, taking the lead as ever.

Sometimes they could ride; sometimes they must walk. The granite outcrops were thick—up-rising around like the stone buttresses of ruined buildings destroyed by fire or shaken to fragments by an earthquake. The shattered foundations, and the masses of fallen walls formed innumerable blind pockets, of which entrance and egress were one, and out of which it was constantly obligatory to retreat. The route became a checkerboard, light squares of progress off-set by dark squares of repulse. Among the scattered débris the horses stumbled and slipped. Here and there grew trees—now chiefly cedars and spruce; tough bushes, such as the thimbleberry and the mountain sumac, sprang from footholds on the granite itself; grasses and flowers were abundant; the air was warm and pungent: but save for the few birds, the striped gophers, and the whistling red marmots, the region impressed as a country uninhabited, even undiscovered.

"We'd better leave the horses, while we go on without them and see if we can't get up on a high point where there'll be a view," proffered the girl. "It doesn't seem as if anybody ever could have been here before—does it! I've never heard about it, even from the Indians. But we've got to find a way out. I'm sure we must be pretty near to the Osier."

"Or the Pacific Ocean, or New York, or the North Pole," commented the man, sarcastically.

He toiled after her, as she gallantly fought the impeded incline. Amidst the prodigious clutter of granite they were but pigmys. Nature in her primeval haunts is so prodigal, so vast.

They were confronted by a wall intersecting their path; through it opened a narrow passage, like a crack, partially screened by bushes growing from the ground and from interstices of the rock. The girl fearlessly slipped in. With sudden impulse she halted, and looked back.

"Coming?" she asked.

"As fast as I can," he grumbled.

She waited.

"I can beat you climbing, can't I?" she bantered, lightly.

"Oh, you're a wonder—especially at keeping a trail," he derided.

"I'm sure you're very cross," she ventured. "Do you wish we'd never come? Why not pretend we're having fun? We're exploring."

"Bosh!" he rebuffed.

Her lower lip quivered. She was so tired, and he was so cruel. All the burden was upon her. But even now, had he only put his arm about her for an instant, and called her—"Girlie," as he did when he had wheedled her, she would have forgiven, almost have forgotten. First she might have cried—in his arm. Oh, how she wished that she might cry!—and thereafter she would have smiled with heart in her smile. She was so helpless; so far from daddy.

She stifled her little sob; and with him now close behind her she continued on through the aisle. Their arms brushed the rock at either side, beneath their feet was thick, dark green kinnikinnick, the berries just ripening to red. They debouched.

"Arthur!" she gasped, stopping abruptly, in the very orifice. She felt behind her with her hand, to grasp his. But she did not recoil. She held the fore.

The space to which they had penetrated was flat, grassy, edged by bushes and engirded by the sheer granite walls: a space that might once have formed a basement room of the great office-building or apartment-house signified by the ruins. But that which startled was the huge, amorphous, ragged bulk which, staggering from a prone posture, with lowered, stupid head, fronted them.

"What is it?"

The man peered, with staring black eyes and face paling, over her shoulder.

"A bear—isn't it?"

She barred with warning arm. They stepped back a space.

"Oh, Arthur! It's a buffalo!"

She spoke with awe; the words were a murmur of wonder, not of affright.

Amidst the brush of the little park's farther side sounded a rustle, and a coyote, alarmed by their conversation, sneaked from some vantage point and vanished through a crevice.

"A buffalo—your grandmother!" he scoffed, rudely, with his favorite rebuking expression. "The buffalo were all killed off long ago. It can't get at us—can it?" The color returned to his face. "Anyway, look out."

She heard the creak of holster as he fumbled at his revolver.

"And it's blind! See? It's blind. It is blind, Arthur! Poor thing. Don't shoot."

She tossed a chip of granite, and at the fall of it upon the sod at one side of him the animal turned a vague, uneasy, sightless gaze. He snorted. The coyote had made but a short circuit, and now from a niche in the top of the high wall beyond was watching, curiously, with pricked ear and greedy chops.

"That's right," said the man. "Blind as a bat."

The eyes of the great beast were filmy and set. He continued to front them. The horns of his low held head were rough and battered; the long matted hair hung in tatters from the immense shoulders, and over the forehead; the legs, widely straddled, were scarred with old wounds and with new; from the



The old man watched her

lean rump the stubby tail twitched lax—the fire of feeble defiance did not suffice to stiffen it. As he stood there, with hoarse breathing and occasional essay at stubborn pawing: sturdy, heavy, unyielding, old, scarred and grizzled and shaggy, he struck the girl with infinite pity. She thought of her father.

"He must be very, very old."

The man twirled the cylinder of his revolver. He cocked the weapon.

"Let me past," he said. "You toss stones at one side, and I'll sneak around on the other and give it to him."

"No!" she exclaimed, vehemently. "No! Don't you dare! He's so old, and helpless, and alone; and he's the last.

Oh, Arthur; he reminds me of daddy. Doesn't he you?"

"Two of a kind," I admit," he replied contemptuously. "We'll take his head with us, and have it hung up as a family portrait—your family. Are you going to let me past?"

"No!" she cried, opposing him with all the strength of her young body. "No, no! He's of the last of the old West. Don't let's annoy him. Let him live in peace. All but he are gone; he's deserted—everything that loved him has deserted him—"

"As you deserted old Bill," he suggested.

"But I'm going back to him," she de-

clared passionately. "I am, I didn't mean to desert him. I didn't know what I was doing. I was cruel."

"Then I'll shoot from here," he threatened. "He can't get at us. Watch out—"

"No!" she insisted. Her voice suddenly took on a new note. "Look," she uttered, sadly. "He cannot stand—he's too feeble. Oh, Arthur—he's dying!"

"Good move."

She did not reply to the cool comment. The buffalo's straddled legs had slowly spread farther; as slowly, they doubled under him; with a snort and a final attempt to paw, he sank upon them. He rolled upon his side and lay panting. His flanks heaved convulsively. His labored exhalations blew from before his nostrils the twigs and dried blades.

"Poor thing," she murmured, compassionately.

A last deep breath—the outstretched legs stiffened, quivered, and were still. From his station upon the granite rampart the coyote whimpered eagerly.

"Perhaps you'll let me past, now," said the man.

She did not respond. She left the passage, and walked to the dead bull.

"Yes, he must have been very old," she mused.

She ventured to touch a horn. She fingered it gently.

"Nobody could have known that he was in here. Daddy says the last plains buffalo was killed in '92, by an Indian. Perhaps this one was a calf, from some mother who was driven up here. He has been in here a long time. See, how close everything is eaten. And he is so thin. He was starving."

"Saved me a cartridge." The man kicked the gaunt back. "Wish I had a good knife. I'd skin him."

She faced him indignantly.

"Yes, you would," she agreed. "To take advantage of a defenseless old buffalo, the last that lives, and shoot him, and then skin him. It's just like you. Oh, I hate you! You are so selfish. You have no thought for anything outside of yourself. Nothing appeals to you, beyond that. You have no sentiment, no mercy; you would have tortured this blind old bull; you would have taken me from daddy; you are always sneer-

ing at the West. There's nothing that you respect—nothing that's venerable or helpless or—or different. I could never be happy with you; never, never. As soon as I find some way out I'm going back, and you can go on. We don't want you in the West. We have tried to be good to you—we've been too good to you. I'm glad you can't skin this buffalo, and take him as a trophy. Perhaps you'd like to take *me* along as a trophy. I'm glad he didn't die tormented by an outsider. My daddy never would have harmed him. Tom wouldn't have harmed him. Only an Indian, or a Mexican, or somebody like you, from your ignorant, narrow East, would have harmed him. We don't grow mean, out here. I'm going back to my daddy; he needs me; *he* sha'n't die deserted. I love him; he's a man—no matter if he does use bad grammar and eat with his knife, and cling to his pipe and tobacco. He's a part of the West—and so was this buffalo. Dear old daddy. But you can't understand; you aren't big enough. Now you can go where you please—but I hate you."

She knelt and smoothed the tangled hair of the great prostrate head. Then she abruptly arose, and marched straight across the little park. The man sulkily followed.

Behind the screen of bushes opposite was another crack opening into a second, similar park. The buffalo's hoofs had beaten a path through. From this second park was again an exit—once of sufficient width but now blocked by a fallen mass from the walls above. Thus the buffalo had been corralled. The end was gradual, but inevitable.

They managed to squeeze by the obstruction, and they emerged upon the brow of a long slope cumbered with boulders. Far below was the silvery thread of a stream—issuing from lush natural meadow-lands on the right, passing through a *cañon*, and flowing among green bottoms and sage, on the left.

They gazed.

"The Osier," said the girl. "I know where we are. This must be Apache Cañon. Manuel's sheep will be over there. You can find him and he'll tell you how to get where you want to go. I can reach the ranch by myself."

"So you're going back to 'daddy,' are you?" sneered the man, "That mangy old buffalo bull made you homesick, eh?"

"I'm glad," she remarked, simply. "I might have known."

She unhesitatingly turned, and hurried faster and ever faster. He followed, as before. A little detour brought them to the horses.

"Good-by," she said. "You can't take your horse through where the buffalo is. You'll find Manuel below, back a short distance, or some other herders. They all can understand English, enough. You can send us the horse, by somebody; don't forget that."

She rode off at a tangent. He scowlingly proceeded, alone.

It was only noon when the girl, slackening the headlong gallop, rode through the open gate and into the ranch-yard. Her father had appeared on the porch, at the sound of hoofs, and was standing, bareheaded and in shirt-sleeves, looking. It seemed to her anxious eyes that he was more stooped than usual; that a burden of disconsolation was bowing him. But at sight of her, coming, he waved his hand with his accustomed bluff welcome. She slipped impetuously from her seat. She gave him no time for approaching to help her unsaddle.

"Why, pettie!" he exclaimed, as she flung herself upon him. His strong, gingham-sheathed arms willingly enclosed her. "Why, pettie! I was beginnin' to miss ye. Seems to me you stayed

quite a bit, didn't you? We've had the gate open for you all the mornin'."

"Oh, daddy, daddy!" she moaned. "I wasn't there. I almost went away—with *him*. But I couldn't. I kept seeing *you*."

"You went with that—whippersnapper?"

His voice was stern.

She clung to him, overruling the sternness.

"But I couldn't stand it, daddy. I left him. He's—I don't like him."

"He didn't harm ye, pettie?"

"No!" She looked up bravely. "He? Why, daddy!"

"There, there, pettie," he soothed, smoothing her shoulder tenderly. "Never mind. I know you'd learn—an' as long as the lesson warn't *too* hard. If it was—why, I'd foller him and kill him like a coyote!"

"You needn't, daddy. Really, you needn't."

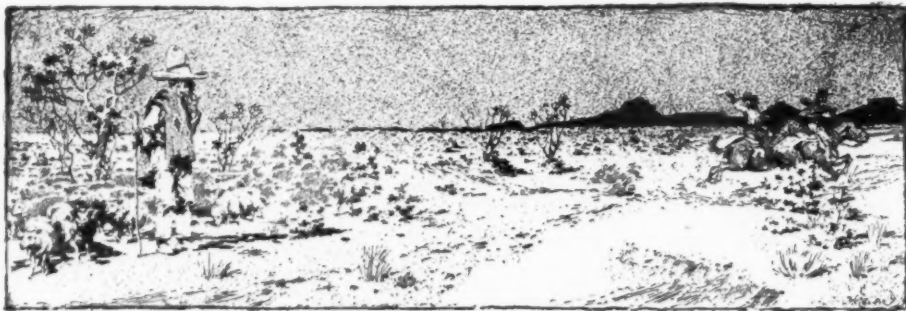
Her voice was earnest, her eyes did not flinch. He was satisfied.

"All right, pettie. Then we wont say no more about it. But Tom's just startin' to fetch you over. He's down in the corral now, ketchin' a hoss."

"I'll go and tell him that—I'm here," she said, flushing.

"Mebbe you'd better. He was missin' you, too. He—you needn't be afraid of *him*, pettie."

She flushed deeper. With a hearty hug, she left, and ran blithely across the yard. The old man watched her.



Manuel looked as they passed



The "Wolverines" hailed Harvey vociferously

The Call of the City

BY PEARL WILKINS

Author of "By Decree of Peggy," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE S. DUBUIS

AS with blast of whistle and clang of bell the 12:30 north bound pulled into Excelsior, Harvey Stewart rose reluctantly from his red plush chair, shook hands with the fat coffee-drummer who had entertained him for the past three hours with yarns "of the road," gathered up two newspapers, a time-table and his suit-case, descended the little iron steps that were quickly let down, and was—"home again."

It was Sunday, and the group of a dozen unbarbered loungers whose habit it was to stroll over casually "to see the train come in" was appreciably swelled by crowds of "mule-punchers" from the neighboring ranches; young fellows and "lady friends" in buckboards and rubber tired buggies; girls in lawns and flowered dimities, their arms about each other; half-grown boys, and two delegations in white uniforms whose red

capital letters, sprawling proudly over chests, proclaimed them to be "Tigers" and "Wolverines" respectively.

They hailed Harvey vociferously:

"Hello, Hello, Hello, Harve! Thought you'd eloped with yourself! How many gold-bricks you got with you? Time you was gettin' home. Em'ly's begun to chase 'round with Jim Day!"

They slapped him resoundingly on the back.

Harvey looked up quickly in the direction of the chocolate colored day-coach from which he had just alighted. The drummer was leaning out grinning.

"What an awful town!" said a woman's voice.

Under the liberal coat of "talc" powder, which the metropolitan barber had applied that very morning, Harvey's face reddened, his shoulders went up a notch and then dropped. He stood with his

suit-case still in his hand, blinking a little in the hot June sunshine.

He had changed. Even the boisterous, unthinking crowd saw that at first glance. The northbound had not brought back the same boy it had carried away eight weeks ago.

"How are you, boys?" he said quietly, and the inflections of his voice were different—urbanized.

A girl bowed to him and he lifted his hat; his manner of doing it was unfamiliar—metropolitan? The very look out of his eyes, impersonal, already a little weary, suggested a surfeit of crowds, street-lights, shops, human faces. Yes, Harve had changed.

A gray bearded man, whose massive shoulders, prematurely stooped, and knotted hands eloquent of hard work, bespoke the rancher, was worming his way through the crowd. He was Harvey's father. He was in his shirt-sleeves and was chewing a straw.

"Well, Harve," he drawled, shaking hands, "back at last, are you?"

"More or less," replied Harve.

"Horse is tied to the hitch-rack in front of Tracy's saloon. Better set your valise an' bundles in the buggy. We'll have to wait a half-hour anyhow before the mail's distributed. Had dinner?"

"I ate in the dining-car."

"Oh, the diner? I'd have thought Mrs. Knox could have put you up a lunch, after you payin' her six dollars a week for eight weeks."

"I s'pose she would have. I never asked her."

The captain of the "Tigers" caught up with them.

"Goin' to stay for the game this afternoon, Harve?" he inquired. "Say, you ought to have been here last Sunday. The Catalina bunch was down. Ho! Ho! we didn't do a thing to 'em! The score was eight to one in our favor. Britt Nelson in the box, too."

"I was at a game when I was in the city," replied Harvey. "Big leaguers, you know. The grand-stand was about as big as this whole town. Talk about ball playin'! You ought to see *them* play!"

"Oh, I don't know!" exclaimed the

captain belligerently. "Thursday's *County Sentinel* said a little more practice and we'd be playin' league-ball! The *Sentinel* said that!"

"How many ads. you been giving them?" insinuated Harvey.

They crossed the street to a narrow brick building with a sham front. A huge sign of "Postoffice" swung above the double screen-doors, and on either side of them, painted with black carriage-paint on the red brick background, ran the legend: "Amateur Supplies, Sporting Goods, Campers' Outfits."

"Comin' in?" said the Tigers' captain and pushed open the door. The place was packed with people waiting for the mail.

"Why, hello, Harve! Aint seen you for some time. You 'n' your Dad got your hay all up?"

Harvey turned. "That you, Evans?" said he. "Hay? I don't know anything about it. I've been away for two months."

Old man Stewart appeared with the bulky roll of the *Sunday Screamer* under his arm. "Want to start home now, Harve," he demanded, "or goin' to stay for the game?"

His son shook his head. "We might as well go home now, I guess."

"These little shacks of stores look mighty dinky after what I've been used to seeing," he remarked as he untied the horse.

Old Stewart was unwinding the lines from the whip-stock.

"I s'pose so," he assented. "Jump in."

Harvey pulled the light lap-robe well up.

"You ought to have the tires to this buggy set," he grumbled as they clattered down a quiet back street; "they rattle worse than a milk-wagon."

Not a soul was in sight. The houses were all painted white or whitewashed and the grass in the yards was drying up. Boxes of geraniums and begonias on back porches looked wilted and dusty.

"Now if that was in the city, they'd be blue-grass or white clover in those lawns, and awnings over the windows so they'd look pretty."

Old Stewart reached with his whip

for a fly buzzing about the horse's ear.

"You seemed to have liked it in the city, Harve," he said meditatively.

"It's the only place to live," declared his son.

"Well, Harvey, how does it feel to be home again?"

This time it was "Ma" Stewart who asked. She beamed at her son across the table through her gold-rimmed glasses as she pressed upon him cold sliced ham and layer-cake and potato salad.

Harvey was not hungry.

"It feels—lonesome," he said in reply.

"Lonesome! Did you ever hear the like? When I get home from the city I'm so beat out from dodgin' street-cars an' trucks an' automobiles an' delivery wagons I feel like stayin' in bed for a week. I despise to stay cooped up in a room in some old hotel, and I never *can* sleep for the noise."

"It didn't bother me at all," said Harvey. "I'm afraid, though, I can't sleep to-night for missing it."

He got up from the table, changed his clothes, and followed his father out to the barnyard. The hired man was milking the cows.

"Did I tell you about the roan heifer?" inquired the elder Stewart. "She jumped the fence into Agnew's wheatfield an' nearly foundered herself to death. We had to send for Doc. Seavers. Your ma an' me was up till twelve o'clock pourin' stuff down her throat."

"Ma wrote me about it," said Harvey listlessly.

"Look, Harve, here comes the colt. Hi Rex, hi Rex! Growned some since you seen him, hasn't he? Say, Jim Agnew's got a dead match for him. If he don't ask too much I was thinkin' of buyin' him as a mate for Rex here. What do you think about it?"

Harvey had jumped down from the hayloft and was standing with his hands in his pockets, staring indifferently at a little cloud-tinged sunset-pink that showed through the wide open barn-door.

"Suit yourself," said he.

He left his father talking with the hired man and went back to the house.

"Ma" Stewart was clearing the table and singing to herself: "There's sunshine in my soul to-day!" She looked up quickly as Harvey slammed the screen-door.

"'Phone in working order? I guess I'll ring up Em'ly."

"Ma" smiled knowingly. "I was wonderin' if you'd forgot about Em'ly," she said slyly. "She was over just the other day askin' when you'd be home. I guess you didn't find any city girls that come up to *her*."

Harvey was ringing vigorously. The line was a local one, there was no "Central," and everyone did his own "calling up."

Harvey, with the receiver to his ear and his hand on the mouth-piece, spoke irritably to his mother.

"No wonder I can't get 'em. There's about a dozen receivers up. Get off the line you rubbernecks! What? Hello—Yes—Harve, *Harvey Stewart*—That you, Em'ly? Just got back to-day—It hasn't seemed long to me, I'd have stayed another month if I could—You bet! The time of my life—What? Oh, that's just some goat butting in. Don't pay any attention—Say, you going to be busy to-night? No?—All right, I'll be over. Good-by."

"There ought to be an up-to-date telephone company in here," he complained as he "hung up." "This business of having anybody and everybody chipping in whenever they feel like it is getting too thin."

He harnessed his black mare "Dolly Varden" to the best buggy, changed his clothes again, and whirled off down the dusty road.

Emily was sitting on the porch in the gathering June dusk when he drove up. She had on a white dress. The red rambler roses that climb riotously over the porch were all in bloom. A breath of wind wafted their spicy, musky sweetness to Harvey as he sat in the buggy by the fence.

"Shall we go to church?" asked the girl as she tripped out the gate.

"Anywhere else *to* go?" countered Harvey with elaborate sarcasm.

There was moonlight when they came

home—moonlight so brilliant that Agnew's tin-roofed barn a half-mile up the railroad-track showed plainly as at noon. The fields were silver. Dew steeped the grass and the half-closed poppies along the road. It was a night for love.

Harvey pulled the horse to a walk and let down the top of the buggy. The silence—a silence that yet had in it a hundred infinitesimal sounds, the chirping of crickets, the flutter of moths' wings, was potential with the many things that might well be said.

Emily, drawing out two long pins with gorgeous glass heads, took off her hat. She half-raised her arms, as if she would gather to her all the wasted sweetness of the night.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she sighed.

Harvey laughed grimly.

"Too much of it," he said disagreeably. "It's too slow. It's a regular—regular—Sleepy Hollow. Nobody really *lives* here. They just get up, work, eat their meals, go to bed, and—die. I'm goin' to get out."

Emily was staring wistfully down the white road barred with the slanting, black, moon-shadows of the telephone-poles.

"Tell me about when you were in the city," she said.

"Oh, the city! There's something 'doing' there. Some place to go every night and every day, too, if you're a mind to. At the boarding-house where I stayed there were five fellows and seven girls, not counting the old maids and widows. We made things hum, I can tell you!

"There was one girl that worked in at Rogers' big department-store. Her

name was Lolita. The night before I left a bunch of us went down to Little Coney. You can put it down, we didn't go home till we'd done everything there was to do. We rode on the scenic-railway seventeen whirls. You couldn't have a time like that, here."

Emily drew a long breath. "Is—is Lolita pretty?" she asked boldly.

"What? I guess she is. All the fellows where she works are crazy about her. She promised to write to me."

"Did she? I believe that wind's getting cooler. If you don't make Dolly Varden hurry, I'll freeze."

"Are you cold?" asked Harvey. "Take my coat."

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that. The idea!"

But he had already whipped it off and was bundling her into it. His arm dropped about her shoulder.

"You're an awfully pretty girl, Em'ly," he said, breathing heavily.

"Am I?" she asked, with an embarrassed laugh. The flush in her cheeks was almost visible in the strong moonlight. The perfume of a rose she wore in her hair was flung

around them. She looked up at him, her dark eyes wide open. "Prettier than Lolita?"

The spell was broken. Harvey abruptly took away his arm.

"Lolita!" he said. "She's the dev—excuse me—the deuce! And there are hundreds more like her. You can see 'em everywhere, in the parks, in the streets, in the theaters and restaurants, always all dressed up, with bangles and perfumes and their faces white as statues,



"That you, Em'ly?"



"Shall we go to church?" asked the girl

and a look in their eyes like you was the dirt under their feet."

He took the whip from its socket and gave Dolly Varden a vicious cut.

"By the Great Hornspoon! I got to change that look," he said between his teeth.

"How?"

"Oh, there are hundreds of ways if I could only get away from—this."

His impatient gesture repudiated the little town dreaming in the moonlight, the silvery-blue fields, the orchards sunk in deep sleep and exhaling the honeyed scents of ripening fruit—all the romance and mystery of the country night.

They drove under the giant oak tree that stood before the gate of Emily's home. Through the interstices of the dark boughs loaded with lichens the moonlight was reflected back from the polished surface of the leaves. Harvey alighted and helped.

"Good-night," said he. His fingers closed over hers an instant. "Why, your hands are like ice. I hope you haven't gone and caught cold."

"Oh no," answered Emily. "How could I, when I had on your coat? You'd better put it on or *you'll* catch cold yourself, I suppose you'll be over before you set out for the city again."

Harvey dropped her hand. He took up the lines and sprang into the buggy.

"Of course I will," he promised lightly.

He spoke to Dolly Varden and was off; the wheels crunched through a patch of gravel and then clattered loudly on the hard white road. He never looked back or he would have seen Emily standing on the porch amid the roses, quite motionless for a long time, her head drooping a little, her hand pressed against her heart.

The next morning—Brrrrrrr!—the

tin alarm-clock wrenched him from sleep in the gray dawn. His holiday was over. He had "got out of" haying, but the fruit-season was in. His heart was sore within him as he shuffled into his overalls and cowhide shoes.

After breakfast and "chores" he set out for the orchard. It was a big one—six acres. They were handling the peach crop. Down the middle of the orchard stretched a broad, cleared belt of plowed ground covered with the big rectangular trays of the drying fruit. Yonder among the trees was the sulphur-house and the long tables, shaded with white canvas, where the "cutters" would sit presently.

Harvey and the hired man set about filling the sixty pound boxes, for which the cutters would receive fifteen cents each. The hired man spread the canvas, while Harvey climbed the trees and shook down showers of peaches. As the boxes were filled old Stewart, with white Ned hitched to a sled, hauled them to the tables.

At eight o'clock the cutters arrived in a hay-wagon from Excelsior. They were girls and women for the most part, and went to work with a great deal of chatter.

The hired man called to them continually, "joshing," stealing the ripest peaches from the trays, laughing at those who scolded about the boxes of small sized fruit.

In other years Harvey had done the same thing, but not—not—now. He worked doggedly, with tightly compressed lips and without an unnecessary word. The sticky fingers of the cutters and the flies buzzing about the trays sickened him. As he stumbled over the baking clods he asked himself disgustingly if this were—Life.

Old Stewart watched him uneasily.

"What ails the boy?" he asked of the hired man.

The hired man was not concerned.

"Oh, he'll come 'round to his oats if you give him time," he said nonchalantly. "I killed a little gopher-snake over there by the cherry tree. I'm goin' to put it in Nell Morgan's box. I bet she'll jump!"

But Harvey did not seem to "come

round to his oats"—not very quickly. All his spare time was spent in writing long letters, which he carried to town, after the day's work, to post. Of nights, long after old Stewart and the hired man were snoring, "Ma" could hear him tossing, tossing, into the early dawn.

"What's the matter, Harvey?" she asked at last, when one day he had risen from the dinner-table leaving his favorite dessert of "apple-snow" untouched. "Are you sick?"

He turned upon her. "Sick!" he exclaimed. "Sick! Yes. I am sick to death of this darned old farm!"

The slow dull crimson crept up under his skin. He moved a step nearer his father. "Dad," he said in a choked voice, "I can't stand it here any longer. I got to go back to the city."

"Why, you've just been there," the old man replied, wonderingly. "It's a busy time now—"

"You don't understand. I want to go for *good*. I had a letter from Dave Castle last night. He's the fellow I told you about—the civil engineer. He says there's an opening in the 'Greenway Bridge Construction Company.' He'll get me in. Greenway started at the foot of the ladder himself. I'll work. I'll study. I'll *be* somebody."

"Ma" Stewart sat motionless, her face white as paper. Her husband showed a vexatious slowness in rising to the occasion.

"You want to *leave* mother and me?" he asked unbelieving.

Harvey rapped on the back of a chair in exasperation.

"Did you or Ma either think of *your* folks when you ran away and got married and started out for yourselves? You have lived your life the way you wanted to. Now let me!"

It was the old, old cry—yet a cry which no true father or mother ever quite comprehends or—forgives; the cry of youth for the untried, the freer field, Life.

"The ranch will be yours when—when—we are gone," said the old man ponderously. "I'm insured for two thousand dollars. I've got money in the bank. It'll all be yours."



"If you're bound to go to the city, you can"

"But I'd have to stay here!" fretted Harvey. "I'd have to stay here and—farm. I'd rather work in a sweat-shop."

"I reckon you don't know what you're talkin' about. This fool notion must have struck you mighty sudden. You've lived here a good many years and you didn't complain."

"I didn't know. I'd never been anywhere. How could I tell what I liked?"

Old Stewart drew out his large red handkerchief and mopped his face.

"I've worked hard for what I've got," he said hoarsely. "For come pretty near thirty-five years I've got up winter and summer at four o'clock. I've plowed, I've harrowed, I've—"

Harvey gave an exclamation that was something between a groan and a laugh.

"Thirty-five years," he said, with a quick intaking of the breath. "Good Lord! Why, in a third of that time I want stone houses and automobiles and offices in skyscrapers and servants and a wife and good clothes. I want all those things and more. I'll never get 'em on a farm!"

He went out, slamming the screen-door behind him.

It was a month later, and Sunday night again. Harvey was lying on his back on the side porch, staring up at the sky. The stars were out, thick strewn and close; the milky way was like a web of luminous silver. Presently there would be a moon. At intervals came faint puffs of south wind spreading all around mingled scents of sunflowers, of tarweed, of ripening fruit from the orchard; but Harvey was oblivious. He was rebelliously clinching and unclenching his fists as he tried to consider a future in which there were to be chores and harvests, and haying and plowing and seeding *ad nauseam* and *ad infinitum*.

Far up the railroad-track the electric-lights of the county-seat burned and glowed like the name of a show pricked out in lights over the entrance of a theater entrance.

Emily had gone driving with Jim Day. Harvey turned over on his side and beat a fierce tattoo on the floor.

From the south came a low rumble that momentarily grew louder—the 9:30 express. The signal lights at Excelsior, a mile and a half away, grew brighter, and the train shot like a rocket in the direction of the town. The cold scream of the whistle was a call to action.

Harvey raised himself on an elbow as he heard it, catching his breath with a gasp. He sniffed imaginary oil, cinders, dust; the smell that was part of the maddening city; the smell that used to come up in warm waves to the windows of the dingy boarding-house dining-room of an evening, when he sat talking to Lolita—Lolita who worked at Rogers', and had a knowing smile and a shrug caught from the ladies who bought her perfume—Lolita who had promised to write and had never sent him a line.

The bell clanged through the town. That, too, was a note from another world—a world miles and miles from his dull valley of farmers and cows and clods and vegetables—a world where all things, good and bad, were to be bought, and Life ran like fire. He had been and seen. He beat the warm air with his fists; the heat pricked his eyelids, and his skin was dry. A call more real than any call "of the wild" that ever was, was urging him.

Back of him, inside the lighted sitting-room, his father and mother sat talking. Their voices came to him dimly, like voices heard in a dream. In the sheep-pen, the sheep all ran together suddenly, with a huddling noise like that when the ferry-gates are raised and the five-o'clock crowd stampedes for the boats. The wind died down to a far away whisper. A star fell, leaving a long shooting track of flame.

Harvey pulled himself to his feet, kicked the dog, and shuffled across the porch. He opened the screen-door, closed it, and stood there, motionless, blinking in the light of the kerosene-lamp.

His father sat at the big center-table, his forehead corrugated as if in painful thought, one corded hand clutching the stub of a pencil, the other clenched on a pile of paper covered with figures. His

mother was wiping her glasses; he saw her hands tremble and noted that her eyes were very red.

They both looked at Harvey till he hitched his shoulders impatiently.

"Well," he said sullenly, "anybody dead?"

"It's like this," explained his father. "Mother and me have talked it over. If you're so set on leavin' us and makin' your own way, you'll have to do it, I guess. We'll give you a start. If you're bound to go to the city, you can. Any time. There's nothing holdin' you."

The Best Laid Plans

BY RICHARD BARKER SHELTON

IN the little kitchen of the cottage Mrs.

Carey, very red as to the eyes and now and then bravely stifling her choking sobs, faced her lord and master, who stood on the other side of the table placidly puffing a short black pipe, the while he surveyed his wife with a sardonic grin of triumph.

"I'll learn you to hide money away from me," he muttered with a fine air of righteous indignation. "Put some more of it in the old blue tea-pot on the top shelf, if you're mind to. It comes in handy, that it does."

"You gimme it!" said Mrs. Carey, reiterating her plea monotonously. "You gimme it, Jim Carey! That money aint yours. It's mine. I earnt it, every cent of it, cleanin' houses for the folks up on the bluff. I'm goin' to git a dress with it. I aint had a dress for years, and you know it. You gimme that money. It's mine."

Mrs. Carey dabbled her eyes with a corner of her gingham apron.

"You'd oughter be ashamed of yourself," she sobbed. "You make good pay, and what becomes of it? You lose it all gamblin' down in Charley Morse's back room. Oh, I know all about it. And—and then, when you git so fur behind with your bills that the grocer threatens to shut down on you and not let you have anything more till you square up, you steal my money to pay him with. You aint goin' to take my money. You lemme have it!"

"Let's see you git it," said Carey, with maddening coolness.

"I will," cried Mrs. Carey hysterically. "I will. You aint goin' to have it."

She darted around the table, and, clutching his coat, strove to insert her fingers into the inner pocket where the money in question reposed.

Carey let out a great guffaw of rumbling laughter. With the flat of his hand he pushed his wife away; then, as with gleaming eyes she returned to the attack, he pushed her again, harder this time; indeed, somewhat harder than was necessary.

Mrs. Carey staggered back, tripped over the edge of a mat, and sank ungracefully into a nearby chair, where she buried her face in her apron and sobbed without restraint. Carey, without a word or so much as a glance in her direction, caught up his dinner-pail from the dresser, and made his way down the road towards the Conant Explosive Works, where for the past six years he had held the not over-remunerative position of night-watchman.

On the way he stopped at the grocery-store of Briggs, and with an air of lordly munificence pulled from the inner pocket the money he had filched from the blue tea-pot on the top shelf, and paid his long-standing bill. Then, puffing contentedly at the cigar Briggs had graciously set up in honor of the unexpected event, he stalked through the darkness towards the grimy little group of buildings that made up the Conant plant.

The hands were filing past the day-watchman at the wooden entrance gate when Carey reached it. He greeted them jovially, with the air of a man at peace with himself and with all the world. When the last of the hands had departed

up the road, and the day watchman had turned over the keys to him, Carey drew out the short, black pipe from his pocket, filled it, and, perching on the low wall that surrounded the ugly wooden building known as Mill Number 3, he struck a match and puffed away with contented inhalations. This was strictly against the rules, but Carey, when he was quite alone there o' nights, with no one to say him yea or nay, was wont to do much as he pleased. If it pleased him to smoke, he did so serenely, with never a thought of fractured rules or his own jeopardy in the matter.

Carey had just knocked the ashes from his first pipe, and was searching his pockets for the tin tobacco-box, when it happened.

There was a blinding flash, a deafening roar. The low wall seemed suddenly to twist and double like a bucking broncho. The man seated on it felt himself lifted suddenly and unaccountably into space. There was a swift rush of wind in his face, and the horrible sensation of falling, falling, helplessly, inevitably to some black doom.

Then came a shock that knocked the wind from him, and left him stunned and helpless. At his right lay a flaming section of shingled roof; at his left the remains of a grinding machine, twisted and warped beyond all recognition.

For a few minutes Carey lay there beside the edge of the road, groaning weakly. That he was mortally hurt he was thoroughly convinced. But slowly, as no shock of pain racked his body, he began to take hope. Gingerly he propped himself upon an arm; gingerly he sat up; gingerly he began an examination of himself, pulling here, prodding there. In another few moments the satisfying fact became apparent to him, that by some unaccountable miracle, he was quite unhurt, save for a few minor bruises of no real consequence.

As to the cause of the cataclysm that had swooped suddenly out of the peaceful darkness, it took no very remarkable intellect to realize that Mill Number 3, following a well established precedent, had once more gone skyward, leaving nothing to mark its site save a ragged hole in the ground.

Dazedly, but with the sheer joy of being yet alive running strongly within him, Carey got to his feet and stood staring foolishly at the dim bulk of the other buildings of the plant. And even as he stared he heard a commotion up the road.

Excited voices sounded through the darkness, and the patter of running footsteps approaching from the alarmed village. Carey took a few steps forward, then suddenly stopped, and stood breathing hard, an idea of dazzling brilliancy quickening his sluggish pulses.

The voice and the footsteps sounded nearer. Carey, with a quick determination, turned on his heel and slunk into the bushes beside the roadway.

In a moment his coat was off, and he had torn it into shreds. The tattered garment he tossed to the branches of a nearby tree. Then he loosened his shoes. One of them he threw beside the portion of blazing roof; the other he hurled down the road. The contents of his trousers-pockets—a bunch of keys, a knife, and a brass employe's tag—he scattered through the bushes. That was as much as was ever found of Tom Kelley, when the last explosion at the plant had occurred some seven years before.

Chuckling at the amazing simplicity of the scheme, he crawled deeper into the brush at the roadside, gained the open field beyond, and just as the first group to arrive from the village were staring stupidly at the scene of desolation where a few moments since Mill Number 3 had been a definite entity, Carey, coatless and shoeless, shivering a bit in the chill of the night-air, crept cautiously across the stubble of the fields in the direction of his own cottage.

He gained it unseen, pushed open the door and entered. Peering into the darkness through one of the little windows, was his wife. She turned at the sound of his entrance, took one look at his tattered figure, and gave an exclamation of surprise that was half gasp.

"Sh-h!" said he, holding up a warning finger. "For the love of heaven, hold your tongue, woman! Pull down that curtain, quick, and lock the door."

Breathlessly, with wide, staring eyes, Mrs. Carey obeyed.

"Number 3," Carey explained, as he heard the key turn in the lock, "blew up again. No, I aint hurt. Blowed me clean across the road, it did; but I aint got nothin' but a few scratches. Say, our fortune is made, all right," he finished, with an eager light in his eyes.

Mrs. Carey, trembling in her excitement, was staring at him in perplexed doubt.

"Our fortune's made!" she repeated in unbelief. "Do you call it fortune to lose a fine job like that?"

"Job be blowed!" said he with scorn. "Listen to me, Mary, and do a little thinkin' for once in your life. Tell me now, what happened to Tom Kelley when the last explosion came?"

"He—he was killed," said she.

"True enough," said Carey. "And what did the company do for his widder? Tell me that."

"They gave her twenty-five hundred dollars," said she, the perplexity on her face momentarily growing deeper.

"True again," said he. "Listen to me! 'Tis twenty-five hundred we can get as well as the widder Kelley. I'm dead—are you on? I've been blowed to smithereens by the bustin' of old Number 3. I'm a lovely corpse, I am, scattered over the landscape in pieces about as big as the head of a pin, just as Tom Kelley was. My coat, all ripped up, is hangin' on the limb of a tree, and my shoes is nearby, and my bunch of keys and my knife and my tag is strewed promiscuous-like along the road.

"'Poor devil!' says the company, when they finds the pathetic remains of me, 'he sure got his. A faithful man that done his duty.' And up they comes to you and coughs up twenty-five hundred, same's they did to the Widder Kelley."

A light of comprehension came into Mrs. Carey's eyes, to be succeeded immediately by a look of doubt.

"Would you do that?" she said in a low voice. "It's not honest."

"Honest!" he snorted. "Don't prate of honesty. How about the company? Have they been honest? Answer me that. Was it honest of 'em to cut down my wages two years back, and again this past year, and me takin' my life in my hands every night I watched at their old death-trap?

The company owes me all we'll get out of 'em."

Mrs. Carey hesitated, and hesitating was lost.

"This is how we'll do it," Carey pursued. "I'll blow out of here right away. I'll go down to Brewster and stay at George Hall's. As soon as I'm gone, you go down to the works and take on over the stuff of mine they've found. Take on for all you're worth. The more you take on, the more the company'll come up with, no doubt. Then when the company's come up with the coin, you come down to Brewster. I know where there's a snug thing down there that'll keep us goin' for the rest of our life. 'Tis a pool-room that I can buy for fifteen hundred. Get me a coat and some shoes now. I'm goin' to blow out before anyone sees me."

Mrs. Carey brought the coat and shoes. A moment later Carey had slipped out the back door, and was creeping away through the darkness. Mrs. Carey watched him go, and something like a smile curved the drooping corners of her mouth, as he cautiously crawled over the back fence and disappeared.

Carey went down to the railroad-track, jumped the night-freight when it stopped at the tank for water, and landed in Brewster safe and sound, even as the horror of his untimely demise was being discussed in awed tones by the crowd of people about the Conant Explosive Works.

Three days after his arrival at Brewster, the first letter came from his spouse.

DEAR JIM:

The funeral was this afternoon. The remains—the coat and shoes—was in a casket that the company furnished. They also gave me money enough to buy mourning. Mrs. Peters says it's real becoming to me.

There was a good many flowers and Mrs. Jones come over and cooked up a lot of stuff. She makes elegant layer-cake.

Mr. Spencer told me before the services begun that he should be up day after to-morrow to see about a settlement with me. Everything looks favorable.

Yours,

MARY.

P. S.—Henry Knowles says you owed him a dollar and eighty-five cents for tobaccer. Do you?

In the Halls' kitchen, Carey and his friend read the missive together and grinned expansively.

"When I git the pool-room, you git a good job there as marker," Carey declared in a sudden exuberance of spirits. "I've been down to-day makin' arrangements for it. All that remains now is to wait till they come up with the money."

Hall grinned his comprehension, and Carey, with the air of a man who was a coming capitalist, sent him out for cigars.

For three days thereafter there was no news from Mrs. Carey. In the meantime the transfer of the pool-room had all been arranged save the final payment. The papers were drawn up waiting to be signed, and Carey was nightly amusing himself by figuring up the profits of the establishment when it was conducted as it should be under his *régime*.

The fourth day, the second letter arrived from Mrs. Carey. It was only a line, but it was quite sufficient for the waiting man.

DEAR JIM:

Mr. Spencer is goin' to fix things up to-morrow. Yours,

MARY.

Carey, in the highest of spirits, suggested that he and Hall take in the show at the opera-house; which suggestion was accepted with alacrity by his host.

The following day Carey, arriving at the house at night-fall, found a thick letter, addressed in his wife's sprawling hand, awaiting him.

"All over but the cheerin' I guess, George," he announced hilariously, waving the envelope at his friend. "Let's see what she's got. Maybe if she took on sufficient they gave her more than they did Mis' Kelley."

He tore open the envelope, and pulling out the sheets within, began to read. Presently he groaned. After that he collapsed in his chair and sat in a huddled heap, his head grasped between both hands.

"What's wrong?" asked Hall in genuine alarm.

For answer, Carey extended to him

the letter. The other snatched it eagerly and read:

DEAR JIM:

Mr. Spencer has made the settlement, but it wa'n't what you thought it would be. But I'm satisfied with it, and bein' the widder, and the one most interested, I suppose if I'm satisfied with it, that is enough.

We've talked it all over, and he offered me this house here that the company owns, rent free so long as I want it, and they're goin' to pay me six dollars a week for the rest of my life. He offered me either that or the twenty-five hundred, and I took the house and six dollars a week.

I can get along on that as comfortable as can be, and what is more, I can spend it as I'm a mind to, and if I want a new dress once in a while I can get it, without havin' the money I've saved stole from me.

If you'd ever been half-decent or treated me civilized I would see that you got some of this, but you aint, and I'm goin' to live the rest of my life in something like peace. I can do it with a house provided for me and six dollars comin' regular every week. I sha'n't have to clean no more houses for folks on the bluff, and then have the money I've scrubbed and slaved for took away from me.

I never realized how peaceful things could be until you went away, and now I've got 'em peaceful, I intend to keep 'em so.

You needn't come back tryin' to git any of this money away from me, for if you do, I'll tell Mr. Spencer that you used to smoke nights down to the plant, and that like as not you set off the explosion a-purpose.

I hope you'll get a good job somewhere and be as happy from now on as I intend to be.

Yours,

MARY.

P. S.—It's all your own fault actin' the way you done and takin' every cent I ever earnt away from me.

Hall, his face working queerly, laid the letter on the table near Carey's crumpled figure, and tactfully went out, leaving the disconsolate man alone with his grief.

Carey sat without moving, until darkness was coming on. Then with a groan, he roused himself, picked up the morning paper and turned to the advertising pages. Occasionally, he remembered, one might get track of a job there.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life
Maison Deprez:—Afternoon costume of gray broadcloth and
black silk.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life

Maison Rouff:—Cloth costume of rose trimmed with silk
braid of the same shade.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life
Maison Drécoll:—Gray cloth costume trimmed with gray
and silver lace.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life

Maison Béchoff:—Gown of straw-colored Liberty silk embroidered in white.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life

Maison Bernard:—Costume of black Liberty silk and embroidered white tulle.



Parisian Fashion Model—From Life
By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS
Maison Bechoff-David:—Costume of rose satin trimmed with
gold and blue.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life

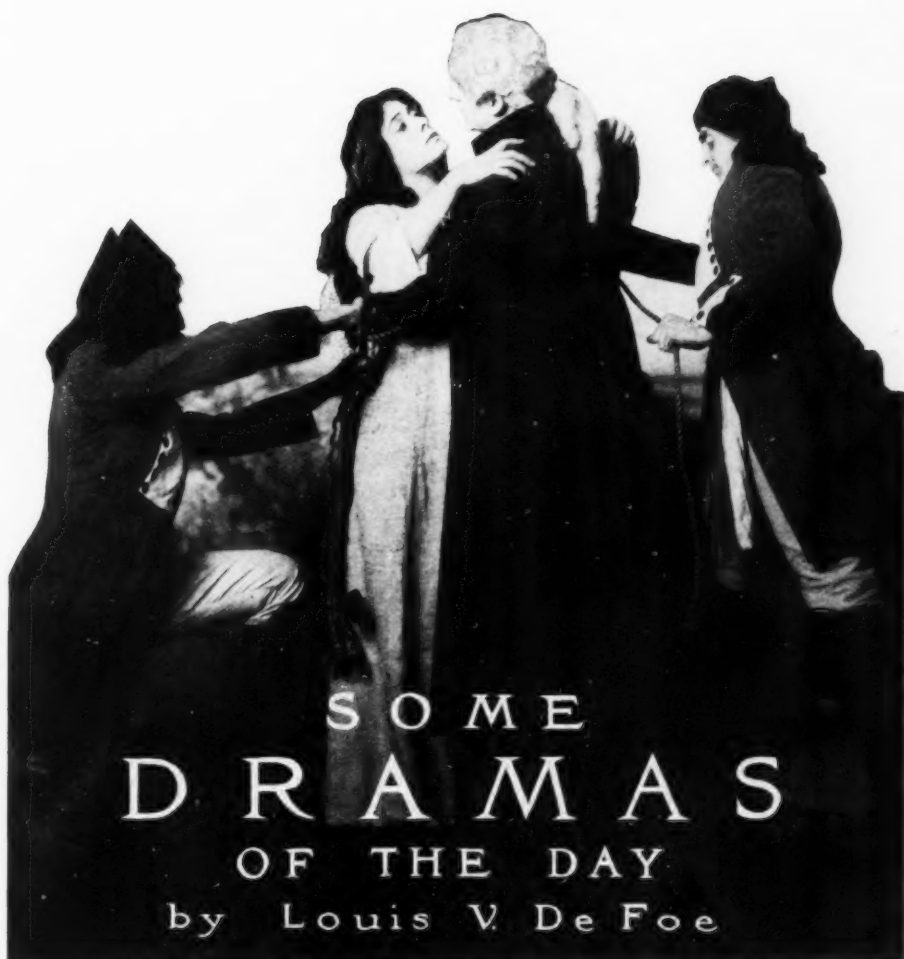
Maison Desclos:—Dinner-gown of mousseline de soie
trimmed with lace and appliqué.



By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model—From Life

Maison Paquin:—Skirt of black velvet; jacket of green
ottoman.



Photograph by Hall, New York

Last scene (Act V) in "The Goddess of Reason." "Yvette" (Miss Julia Marlowe) and "Baron de Vardes" (Mr. White Whittlesey) bound together and about to be drowned in the Loire

A PLETHORA of modern plays, dramas of bald realism untouched by the warm and glowing hues of poetic fancy, has been the distinguishing characteristic of this theatrical season. The monopoly they have secured furnishes ample reason for regret, but it need not cause much surprise. The stage in every era has been tintured by contemporary conditions. Life to-day has lost much of its old quality of romance and the tendency in the theatre is more than ever to represent existence as it really is.

This, rather than a public indifference to her fine genius in the field of romantic histrionic art, may explain the comparative apathy with which New York has received Miss Julia Marlowe during the last month. To spend an evening under the subtle fascination of this brilliant woman's rare and luminous personality and to listen to the music of her pure, limpid elocution is almost sufficient recompense for a whole season of that amiable incapacity and vain self-exhibition which, in the absence of all but

traces of the real thing, we have grown accustomed to accept as acting.

Yet great poetic, romantic *artiste* that she is—there is none left in this country or in England who would dare dispute her preëminence—Miss Marlowe is forced to pay a heavy penalty for her greatness. She cannot depend entirely upon the classic repertoire, for she is compelled to face an insistent demand for modern plays. And she towers so high above the few dramatists ambitious to write poetic and romantic works for the stage in harmony with her powers that she is certainly confronted with a dilemma which amounts almost to a crisis.

Perhaps it is the principle of "any port in a storm" which has led Miss Marlowe this season to cast her fortunes with Miss Mary Johnson's turbulent, somber, and somewhat turgid tragedy of the French Revolution, "The Goddess of Reason." In form the drama is built upon conventional lines. In execution it is often diffuse and indistinct. As poetry, if, indeed, it can claim the distinction of true poetry at all, it is uneven and halting, due partly to the ruthless cutting it has undergone to accelerate its action and make possible its performance on the stage. It never rises to a high level of imaginative power, although some of its situations are effective in a theatrical sense. But the general fabric provides a picturesque background for the principle character of *Yvette*, a Breton herdgirl, wayward, impulsive, irrational, and appealing, whom Miss Marlowe infuses with her own inspiration and raises to moments of true sublimity, during which she gives beautiful exhibitions of her most sympathetic and passionate work. Her acting alone gives an artistic value to "The Goddess of Reason" and entitles it to a place in the limited list of the season's plays, which no lover of dramatic art can afford to miss.

The heroine of "The Goddess of Reason" is *Yvette*, a beautiful and impetuous girl, inflamed with a passionate love for France and hatred against the oppressors of her people. She leads an attack upon the Château of Morbec on the coast of Brittany and meets in hand-to-hand conflict its young lord, the *Baron René*

Amaury de Vardes who, at a previous time, had come upon her in a wood, sitting in reverie beside a Druid Stone. He had been impressed by her loveliness but she had run away. The attack upon the *château* fails and the assailants are taken prisoners. But *de Vardes*, remembering the impression made upon his romantic nature by *Yvette*, pardons her confederates in spite of the protests of his fellow aristocrats and places her in the Convent of the Visitation at Nantes for education and development.

From the girl's story *de Vardes* learns that she is the illegitimate daughter of a former cruel Baron of Morbec and a fisherman's wife—and, therefore, his cousin—but it does not interfere with his growing love for her. This affection angers one of her admirers, *Rédmond Lelain*, an unconscionable revolutionist and firebrand, who rouses in *Yvette* a jealousy for the *Marquise de Blanchefôret*, in whose company the girl has seen her protector, and causes her, in an impulse of pique, to leave the convent and join the Revolution. It is not long before *Yvette's* beauty and imperious nature win her the leadership of the insurrectionary rabble, who clothe her with authority and elevate her to become their Goddess of Reason.

These details constitute the first two explanatory and undramatic acts. When the curtain lifts for the third time upon a scene of wild revel in the public square at Nantes, Miss Johnson's play begins to strike its first fire. *Yvette*, crowned and enthroned, is borne in upon the shoulders of the surging mob in a riotous processional. She finds her bloodthirsty followers in ecstasy over the capture of their hated enemy, *de Vardes*. The plight of her benefactor touches her heart and rekindles the old love, and her impassioned appeal to the rabble for his life secures his release. But when, immediately, she discovers the *Marquise de Blanchefôret* cowering on the church steps, jealousy once more changes her magnanimity into hatred and her malevolent denunciation of both brings about their arrest.

The scene now shifts to the gloomy interior of the Cathedral of Nantes where with other aristocrats, *Yvette's* two victims



Photograph by Hall, New York

Miss Julia Marlowe as "Yvette," enthroned as "The Goddess of Reason" in the play of that title
by Miss Mary Johnston

are awaiting death. Horror at their fate has caused the girl to repent her rashness and impelled her to save the innocent people she has condemned. She even surrenders her good name to their judge, the villainous *Lelain*, but the order for their release, which she secures at the price of dishonor, miscarries, and when she seeks *de Vardes* in the church, the *Marquise* has already gone to her death. It is this touching meeting in the shadow of fate that brings the tragedy to its climax and glorifies the art of Miss Marlowe. The impetuous girl learns, too late, that from the first she has been the object of *de Vardes*' adoration and that his interest in the *Marquise* has been only that of chivalrous friendship. She hears the avowal of love from his own lips. The realization that peace and happiness are forever lost to her brings out the true nobility of her womanhood. If she cannot share *de Vardes*' love in life she will be his companion in death. The curtain falls as she prostrates herself before the figure of the Virgin imploring strength for the ordeal.

There is yet another scene in the Revolutionary tribunal where *Yvette* hears the doom of her lover pronounced. Then, flinging away the tricolor and denouncing the judges and the rabble, she proclaims that she is a traitor to their cause and secures her own condemnation. The curtain rises for the last time upon the scene of the sacrifice. Resigned to their fate and brave in each other's love, the victims of the Revolution's vengeance are bound together and cast into the dark, silently flowing River Loire.

By recourse only to those simple methods by which the highest perfection in acting is, after all, attained, Miss Marlowe makes the character of *Yvette* stand out, a vivid, passionate and commanding figure, a definite and impressive reality. Only one other character presents a reasonably distinct outline—*René de Vardes* who, due in great measure to the admirable acting of Mr. White Whittlesey, has the throb of actual life. Mr. Milton Melrose plays the sinister deputy, *Lelain*, and Miss Olive Temple does what she can in her blonde way with the colorless *Marquise de Blanchefôret*.

The production is picturesque and

beautiful, and there is a realistic animation in the surging mobs and episodes of violence. Some of the frenzied scenes give an impression of being overdone, but the stage management is generally skillful and effective.

UNDER ordinary circumstances, comment of the revival of a Shakespearian play, however praiseworthy in an artistic sense or interesting in a popular way, should not have a place in a department of dramatic criticism and description conducted under the title of "SOME DRAMAS OF THE DAY." The Shakespearian repertoire, immortal monument to classic art though it be, is the drama of a day that is gone, and its occasional reappearance on the contemporary stage can have but slight influence upon the trend of modern dramatic art or thought.

But in connection with Miss Julia Marlowe's foray into the romantic, poetic field, I am sure I shall receive the indulgence of the RED BOOK MAGAZINE's readers if I refer in passing to Mr. Mantell's production of the historical tragedy of "King John," particularly since it is practically the resurrection of a noble work which has been unaccountably ignored by all American actors within the range of the present generation of playgoers. In other eras, David Garrick acted this most cruel, contemptible of the early English tyrants, though he was never satisfied with his portrayal. At a later period in England Macready impersonated the part and was acclaimed. In this country such giants of dramatic art as Charles Kean, Douglas, Cooper, and the elder Booth saw fit to present the tragedy, and John McCullough once appeared in its gallant, magnetic, impulsive, but truculent character of *Faulconbridge*. Their performances are among the spendid traditions of the stage, yet "King John," as an acted play, has been unknown to this generation.

Now has come Mr. Robert Mantell to warm the poetry of the tragedy's matchless lines into new life. Since the death of Mr. Richard Mansfield, Mr. Mantell has been generally acknowledged the foremost tragedian of the American stage. It is a tribute to his high purpose as an actor and as an artist that he is

Photograph by Hall, New York

Miss Julia Marlowe, Mr. White Whitelsey, and Miss Olive Temple in "The Goddess of Reason"





Latest portrait of Miss Grace George, who has scored another big success in "A Woman's Way "



Photograph by Baker Art Gallery, Columbus, O.

Latest portrait of Mr. Robert Mantell

struggling to keep alive a healthy regard for the Elizabethan classics from which our modern drama has sprung.

As it is now being performed by him in impressive settings, "King John" proves to be a drama of fitful appeal but of remarkable power, somewhat episodic in its general plan and concentrating its force upon four magnificent scenes

which would test the resources of the greatest of dramatic geniuses. His conception of the tyrant is consistent with the text which, in this rare instance, has not been butchered to make an actor's holiday. His performance, in some respects, surpasses anything he has done before. The keynote of his interpretation of the *King* is craft, hypocrisy, and inor-

dinate cruelty, mingled with weakness, superstition, and irresolution. This *King John* is stoop-shouldered, bordering on physical frailty, menacing in his sudden outbursts of fury, and despicable in his impulses of abject cowardice. The tyrant's eyes are staring and furtive, his cheeks are pallid, his lips are full and sensual, his fingers twitch nervously, his limbs know little repose. Except in moments of fury he speaks with halting, studied words. It is an embodiment which at once inspires awe and contempt, a remarkable visualization, if not of the historic personage, at least of the creature of Shakespeare's imagination.

The details of the tragedy with its brilliant pageantry and climaxes of somber passion need not be dwelt upon in this description. But Mr. Mantell's production makes it clear that it is not due to a lack of an inspirational quality in the play that other prominent actors have been so reluctant to include it in their repertoires. Rather is it that, to cast "King John" adequately, imposes such vast demands upon its company. The brilliant rôle of the dashing soldier of fortune, *Faulconbridge*, played in this instance by Mr. Fritz Leiber, is almost as important as the *King*, himself. *Lady Constance*, if the passionate intensity of this wonderful character is to be properly interpreted, requires tragic dramatic ability of the highest order, now only partly met by Miss Marie Booth Russell.

It is worth noting that "King John" has not fallen entirely upon deaf ears in New York. The only Shakespearean production of the present season, it has demonstrated that there remains a public which, although small, is still alive to the majesty and beauty of the Elizabethan drama.

MR. W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM'S sudden tumble into popularity in London last year as a writer of light comedies has just had a parallel in New York in the case of Mr. Thompson Buchanan. Only a month ago Mr. Buchanan, unknown even to the fleeting fame of the theatre, was wagging his pencil as a member of a newspaper-staff. It needed only a single afternoon at the Hackett Theatre to call the attention of

the whole of this playgoing city to him, for his first comedy, "A Woman's Way," leaped into remarkable popularity at its first performance.

Mr. Buchanan is entitled to his sudden success, for he brings into the theatre a fund of good spirits and shrewd observation of the light side of life. He also has a lively sense of humor and a fair knowledge of human nature. If the plot of his first piece does not show a great faculty of invention on his part, it at least establishes his adaptive dexterity. It tears the old French triangle up by the roots and, reversing its conventional process, turns it into a merry joke.

Not less fortunate than Mr. Buchanan is Miss Grace George, who is the lucky star of this frolicsome play. Only the fact that the author is a newcomer in the theatre entitles him to precedence over her in this comment. In the rôle of a wife struggling to regain the affection of a philandering husband, in a story which is exactly the reverse of Sardou's "Divorçons," her success is quite as emphatic as his. As *Cyprienne*, in the Sardou play, Miss George has already demonstrated that light comedy is her forte; now, as *Marion Stanton* in the new piece, she has won her way into the first rank of her profession. Nothing quite so sparkling in its humor, so sure in its authority over situation, and so evenly and delicately balanced as her spontaneous impersonation of the heroine has been seen on the light comedy stage this season.

In Mr. Barrie's "What Every Woman Knows," plain *Maggie Shand* tells her dull Scotch husband that if anything unfortunate should occur in their married life she will not act as other women. *Marion Stanton*, the New York society girl who puts her rival to inglorious rout, does not give her gay husband preliminary warning, but when the crisis comes, she follows *Maggie Shand's* tactics almost to the letter.

It is a clandestine motor-car spin over the roads of Connecticut which gives *Marion Stanton* her first inkling that all is not as it should be in her luxurious home. The automobile tips over into the ditch and out of it spills *Howard Stanton* and—not his wife, but the other woman.



Photograph by White, New York

Miss Grace George and Mr. Frank Worthing in "A Woman's Way"



Photograph by White, New York

The dinner-scene in the third act of "A Woman's Way," the new comedy by Mr. Thompson Fuchanan



Recent Portrait of Miss Fanny Ward by Moffett Studio, Chicago

Stage scene from "The New Lady Bantock" showing Miss Fanny Ward and Mr. Charles Cartwright

The circumstances of that secret ride are communicated to the audience by the efforts of the reporters to get the "story." Vainly the much battered *Stanton* endeavors to elude them and fails. They put two and two together and make it spell divorce. And their deductions are believed by the relatives on both sides of the *Stanton* family, all of whom are

amusingly at swords' points. Only *Marion* knows better.

"If *Mrs. Elizabeth Blackmore* gets my husband, she'll have to earn him," declares the deceived wife, and then the sparks begin to fly.

It happens that *Marion* has a young married brother who, in his callow days, had been the victim of the dark Southern

beauty's blandishments. She begins to make quiet investigations, and soon she discovers that there are others, now safely married, who had been hypnotized by the same pair of dangerous black eyes. She even has a loyal friend of her own unmarried days who sheepishly confesses that he followed the same enticing trail. So *Marion* pretends to resign herself to her fate as a discarded and deceived wife, and generously invites *Mrs. Blackmore* to a dinner as her own particular guest—bidding the charmer's other victims and their trustful wives, of course. Her plan is to give her infatuated husband all he can endure of the woman and then suddenly unmask her.

The strained formalities of that brilliant dinner-function are most amusingly set forth in the final act. With the ice-cream, the gracious hostess begins to get in her deadly work. One after another the various men are pilloried and thrust upon the mercies of their own revengeful wives. *Stanton* is amazed. All along he had flattered himself that he has been the only string to the dashing widow's bow. It soon dawns on him what a fool he is and how great a treasure he has in his resourceful and valiant little wife. So he capitulates and finds that *Marion* is inclined to be as generous as she has been crafty.

All the credit for the success of the performance cannot be given to Miss George. She has been wise enough to secure a leading actor whose abilities are a match for her own. He is Mr. Frank Worthing, one of the most finished light comedians of our stage, whose acting of the rôle of the husband is admirable in every respect. Miss Dorothy Tennant plays *Mrs. Blackmore* with a shade too much of the Tenderloin quality, but otherwise she is creditable. Mr. Robert Warick performs good service as *Mrs. Stanton's* loyal bachelor-friend, and the others fall easily into their various grooves—not forgetting Mr. Edward Fielding, who is one of the few stage-reporters that bears even a distant resemblance to the real thing.

A GREAT deal has been heard lately on the subject of the immoral trend of the theatres in New York. It is not a

new thing, of course, for the pulpit to discover that the stage is on its way to the bowwows at headlong pace. Indeed, just now, as in almost every other season, three or four exhibitions are being foisted upon the public in the name of plays which are beneath criticism and beyond contempt. But the estimable clergymen, the sincerity of whose efforts in behalf of public morals is not a moment to be doubted, are altogether too general in their strictures. It is safe to say that not one in ten is qualified to discuss the question from personal knowledge.

Therefore, I hope I may not be misunderstood as championing the questionable or indelicate in dramatic entertainment when I say that Miss Marie Doro's farce, "The Richest Girl," fails from too much disinfection which, while destroying its Parisian germs, has also blotted out the motive on which its story turns. As this play left the Frenchman, Mr. Paul Gavault, it probably was no Sunday-school tract; but after passing through the refining and deodorizing apparatus of the Englishman, Mr. Michael Morton, it has been reduced to a brand of sickish matinee syrup.

Else, why all the hullabaloo over the accident which befell the motor-car of *Benjamine Monnier*, daughter of the *Paris Chocolate King*, which forced that young lady to seek a lodging for the night in the villa of the circumspect and peace loving *Paul Normand* and his artist friend. It is easy to surmise, even without Gallic imagination, what in the original play might have followed the unceremonious visit of the millionaire's wilful, mischievous daughter. The repertoire of feminine indiscretions in French farce is almost endless. But in the form in which the play has reached our stage nothing that suggests even the shadow of impropriety occurs. *Benjamine* is chaperoned as much as the occasion requires by a sedate, elderly housekeeper. She occupies *Normand's* chamber and *Normand* seeks his rest in the sitting-room easy chair by the fire. No possible doubt can be cast over the nocturnal situation, either in the minds of the characters or the audience.

Therefore, the subsequent complica-



Photographs by Moffett Studio, Chicago

Three interesting portraits of Miss Marie Doro who is starring in "The Richest Girl"

tions, which terminate in the breaking off of *Benjamin's* engagement to the *Viscount de Tourzac*, and her new love-affair with *Normand*, are totally without point. The circumstances by which the new alliance is reached may be passed over without description since, when they are not preposterous to the last degree, they are infinitely silly.

Miss Doro, as *Benjamin*, plays the rôle of a wild-eyed, innocent trouble-maker, who masks her inborn propensity for mischief behind an ingenuous manner and a childlike smile. The character has every quality which makes it eligible to a place in the category of cheerful idiots. The star gives no suggestion of attempting to impersonate this character, even such as it is, but strives only to exhibit her own personal peculiarities. Since she is an ambitious little woman, it is her misfortune that she is compelled to bear the burden of "personality," for she has been so busy displaying it that she has never had time to learn to act. Sheer lack of opportunities in the play make it unfair to comment on her companion actors. Among them Mr. Orrin Johnson, Mr. Frank Burbeck, Mr. Louis Massen, and Mr. Frederick Eric give good accounts of themselves when they have anything to do.

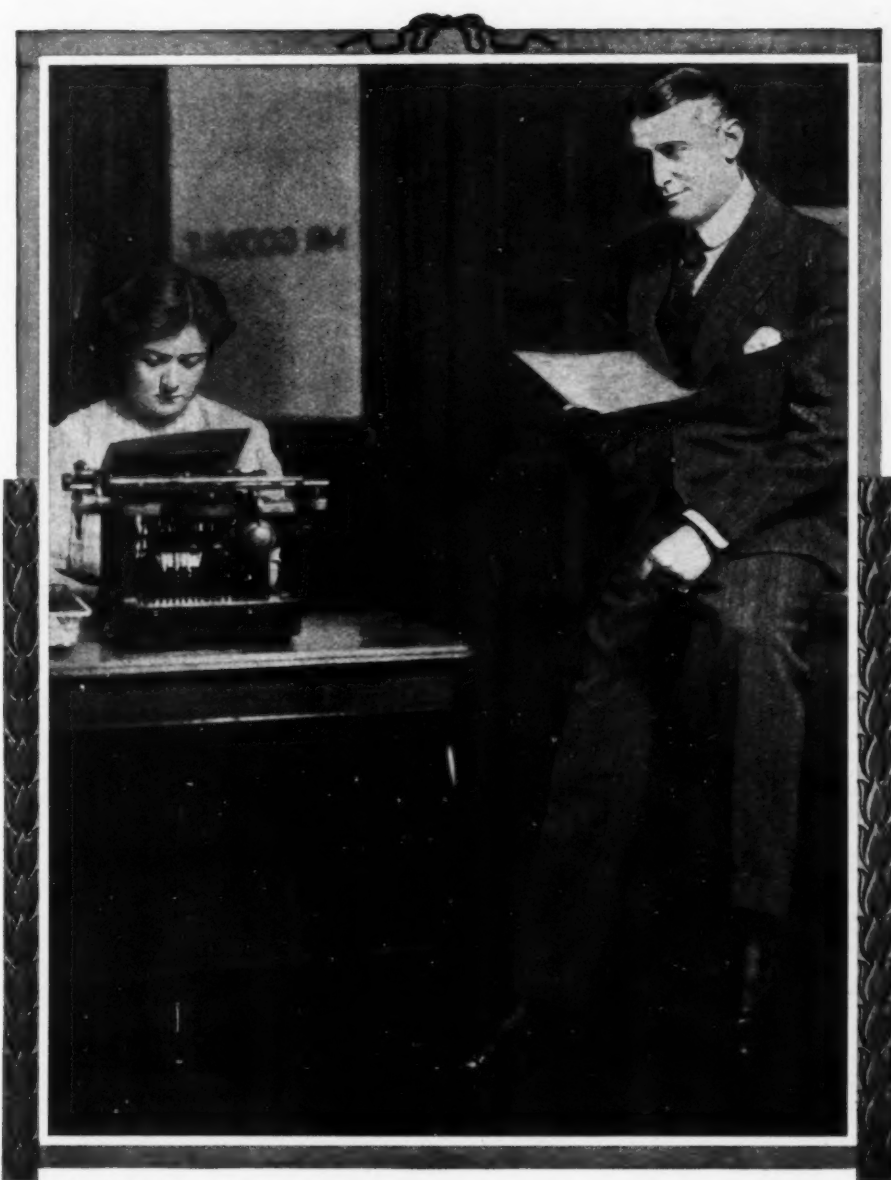
IN another of the recent light plays, "The New Lady Bantock," there is a capitol humorous idea which goes astray from lack of Mr. Jerome K. Jerome's ability to develop it. At least American audiences will not see great hilarity in it, however much it tickled the risibles of the English. The piece is a comedy, although it deals with the most tragic of domestic problems—the servant question—which it approaches from a quite novel angle. But having plunged the newly wedded *Lady Bantock* into the quandary of how to get rid of—not to keep—twenty-three of the best trained menials that ever ruled the below-stairs realm, Mr. Jerome's comedy hesitates, flattens into farce, then takes an offshoot into sentiment, and does not recover its equilibrium until just before the final curtain.

Before she becomes *Lady Bantock*, Fanny was a music-hall singer whom an enterprising manager, for advertising

purposes, had equipped with a fictitious uncle, a Bishop in the Established Church in New Zealand. Subsequently she fell in love with *Lord Bantock* and he, not desiring to flaunt special social inducements before her, married her as plain *Mr. Wetherell*. Arriving at Bantock Hall after the honeymoon, *Lady Bantock* discovers that everyone of the family retainers, from *Bennett*, the butler, down to the humblest scullery maid, is her blood relative.

It does not take long for this crew of obsequious harpies to detect the true identity of the woman who has entered aristocratic life under false pretenses. One and all, and led by *Bennett*, who is a stickler for etiquette, they fall to bullying *Lady Bantock* with the very refinement of calculated cruelty. If their fortunate kinswoman is to maintain her station in life she must be "made over" and *Bennett* vigorously sets about to superintend the job. By hook or crook *Lady Bantock* succeeds for a time in keeping the secret from her husband, squirming under the glowing recitals of the blue-blooded majesty of one of the former *Lady Bantocks*, whose portrait smirks down upon her from its frame above the fireplace, until a concerted invasion of her new home by her former music-hall associates discloses the whole story of her amiable mendacity. The servants improve this opportunity to rebel. Then, confessing everything to her husband, *Lady Bantock* turns upon them and discharges the whole pestering crew. It develops, however, that the celebrated and formidable dame over the mantelpiece was the daughter of a butcher and quite as much of a social pretender in her day as the new *Lady Bantock* herself. So *Fanny's* anger relaxes, her husband is more amused than resentful, and, hiring her menial retinue back, the pair settle down in domestic happiness to raise a brood of little Bantocks for the future strength and glory of England.

Miss Fannie Ward, who fills the rôle of *Lady Bantock* is a native actress who, however, has been appearing much of late in London. As she has no striking personality to exploit she makes an attempt at legitimate impersonation. She



Photograph by Hall. New York

Miss Ruth Maycliffe and Mr. Charles Cherry in "The Bachelor," the latest Clyde Fitch comedy

has energy and spirit, and she is reasonably successful. But the best acting in the cast is contributed by Mr. Charles Cartwright who plays the pompous English butler, *Bennett*, to the life, and builds a ludicrously amusing character under a surface aspect of perfect gravity.

MR. CLYDE FITCH has been so long quiescent — for him — that it began to be an open question whether he

had succumbed to writers-cramp or had wandered off into the labyrinths of a really thoughtful play. Therefore, no little surprise followed the production of "The Bachelor," which proved to be neither as deep as a well nor as wide as a church-door, but just a delicate little whimsicality that supplies an end-of-the-season companion piece to "Girls," which jumped into popularity about this time last year.

Since variety is the spice even of a playwright's life, Mr. Fitch has chosen a masculine title for his new comedy, the feminine interest of which is quite as dominant as in any of his light plays. Indeed, he might as well have called it "The Stenographer," for its story is centered about a young woman who, her family's fortunes having been shaken down in the San Francisco earthquake, learns to play on the keys of a typewriter and then, unconsciously, on the susceptibilities of a middle-aged broker's impressionable heart.

This broker is *George Goodale*, who imagines himself safely beyond the pink-tinted period of life, when really he is just entering the impressionable stage. So wedded is he to his bachelor habits that he needs an occasional shove along the rosy path. This timely assistance is given by *Billy*, the stenographer's young brother, who sees the prospect of an automobile and a college education in his sister's romantic attachment. *Billy's* methods are so menacing and precipitous that *Goodale* is forced to declare his sentiments before he is really sure of them.

The incidents which lead to the broker's plunge into an engagement at his office, humorous as they are, are not so diverting as his attempts to crawl back upon the firm ground of bachelor existence in the next act. The scene is now *Millicent's* cretonne-upholstered flat, to which *Goodale* comes to present himself for *Mrs. Rendell's* inspection and approval. *Billy*, meanwhile, has confided to his sister the details of his exploit in her behalf. Out of the embarrassing situation there can be but one self-respecting exit. So the dinner that was so carefully prepared is not eaten and *Goodale* retires after a stormy interview, much ruffled in feelings and not at all sure that he has not made a lucky escape.

After he has had time to think it over

he discovers that the old lonely life has suddenly lost its charm and his first dictation to his stenographer next morning is both a protest and a confession, a protest against *Millicent's* change of heart of the night before and a confession that, after all, she is the only girl for him.

The side lights which Mr. Fitch throws upon his little play are quite as entertaining as its spider-web love story. One of the chief of these is *Hilda*, the Swedish maid in the *Rendells'* flat, who is not as innocent as she looks and whose lack of appreciation of her proper place in the family councils leads her to give *Millicent* the benefit of her own past experiences in the devious and tangled ways of love. The tribe of humorous servants on the stage has lately shown signs of becoming extinct. As played by Miss Janet Beecher, *Hilda* suddenly opens a way to vast and unexpected possibilities.

The character of *Millicent Rendell* is drawn with all of Mr. Fitch's intuition of feminine peculiarities, and it is prettily acted by Miss Ruth Maycliffe. She is so interesting in her own way that she has no reason to imitate Miss Billie Burke. Mr. Fitch has never been distinguished for creating substantial masculine characters in his plays, so it need be no surprise that *George Goodale* is sketched in rather hazy outlines which, however, are filled in and rounded out by Mr. Charles Cherry in a clever exhibition of humorous acting. Mr. Ralph Morgan plays the rôle of the brother, who almost squelches the flames of love which he so adroitly kindled, a character of freakishly humorous traits. There are others in the cast, but with the exception of *Millicent's* mother, acted by Miss Christine Blessing, they are not concerned in the main complications, although they assist to adorn what, in the final estimate, must be set down as a piece of bright but fragile whimsey.